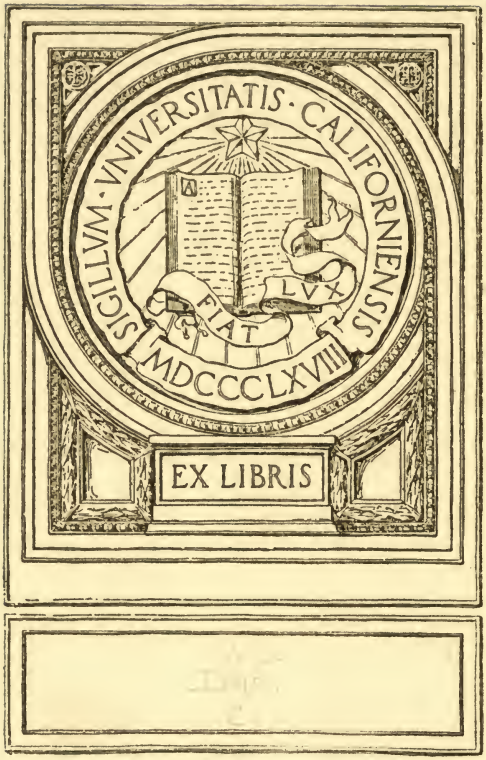
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William Dunlap

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William Dunlap

A Study of his Life and Works and of his Place in Contemporary Culture

By

Oral Sumner Coad, Ph.D.

NEW YORK
THE DUNLAP SOCIETY
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Preface

THE last few years have seen a noticeable quickening of interest in early American drama. This is not at all surprising, for the field is one of much attractiveness from the antiquarian point of view, even though the plays themselves are not of high excellence. In any consideration of the subject, William Dunlap must be given a prominent place. As a playwright and manager, he was the dominating personage in our theatrical affairs at the end of the eighteenth century. But he was more than this. He was a biographer and historian, he was in some measure a journalist and novelist, and he was very much of a painter. In short, he participated in nearly all the cultural activities of his day. For a study of so important a figure there is ample justification.

It is my purpose in the following pages, first of all to present as complete an account of Dunlap's life as the available material will permit. In this connection his work as a theatrical manager and as an artist will be discussed. Then his writings, particularly his dramatic writings, will be examined in detail in an effort to estimate his contribution to the literature of his generation. Throughout the book I shall have a good deal to say about the early culture of this country, both as a background for Dunlap's undertakings and as

a means of pointing out his services to the intellectual development of the new nation.

The existing material bearing on his life is at best limited, and for me it has been limited further still. The owner of seven of the eleven known volumes of Dunlap's manuscript Diary has been unwilling to give me access to them, and thus a possible source of information has been cut off. However, if one may judge from the four available volumes, the other seven contain details which would amplify, but in no way alter, the outline of his life as presented elsewhere.

It is a pleasure to acknowledge my obligation to those who have helped to make this book possible. Among the members of the Columbia faculty I wish to thank especially Professor W. P. Trent, under whose direction this investigation has been conducted; and Professor A. H. Thorndike, Professor Brander Matthews, and Dr. Carl Van Doren, who have given much valuable advice. They have also assisted by reading manuscript and proof. Dr. Frederick W. Atkinson, President of the Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute, has cordially permitted me the use of his splendid collection of early American plays. Mr. Oscar Wegelin, by his bibliographies and his personal suggestions, has distinctly facilitated my task. To the courtesy of the Columbia, Yale, and Brown librarians, and also those of the New York Historical Society, the New York Public Library, and the Society Library, I am very deeply indebted. In studying Dunlap as a painter I have been greatly aided by the Mac-

beth Gallery and the Ehrich Galleries, by The Players, by Mr. Thomas B. Clarke and Mr. Charles Henry Hart, as well as by Professor Theodore S. Woolsey of Yale University. To my wife, who has given generous and varied assistance, and to Mr. Evert Jansen Wendell, whose interest and encouragement have been one of the most pleasant features of the work, I owe a peculiar debt of gratitude.

ORAL SUMNER COAD.

New York City, April 7, 1917.

William Dunlap

William Dunlap

CHAPTER I

Biography from 1766 to 1805

I

WHEN General Wolfe came to the Western Hemisphere to wrest Canada from the French, there accompanied him in the ranks of the 47th regiment, known as "Wolfe's Own," a young Irishman named Samuel Dunlap. Our information regarding his family is meagre. We know only that he was the son of a Londonderry merchant, that he had three sisters, and that the paternal name was originally Dunlop. At the battle of Quebec he carried the colors, and mingled his blood with that of his commander on the Plains of Abraham. Subsequently the young soldier received a lieutenant's commission from General Amherst, and served through the remainder of the French war. After the British triumph, his regiment was stationed at Perth Amboy in the colony of New Jersey. Here Lieutenant Dunlap fell in love with Margaret Sargeant, a native of New Jersey of English descent. The lure of Hymen proving stronger than the lure of Mars, Dunlap

sold his commission, married Miss Sargeant, and established himself as a storekeeper in the town.[1]

Perth Amboy then contained not more than three hundred houses, but it could boast considerable prosperity and importance. Admirably located on a fine harbor at the junction of the Raritan River and Staten Island Sound, it had become the capital of the province, a garrison town, and a social center for the New Jersey aristocracy.[2]

On the 19th of February, 1766, a son—their first and only child—was born to Samuel and Margaret Dunlap. Him they christened William. "Among my earliest recollections," he wrote in after life, "are those connected with sickness, and the relief derived from being carried in the arms of my father."[3]

William's education was begun by his mother. But while yet in petticoats, he was sent to learn his letters at a dame-school, kept by Mrs. Randall, and thence was transferred to the strap and ferule of Master McNaughton, a black-looking Irishman. His more regular tuition started under Thomas Johnston, an Oxonian who was engaged in 1774 to

[1] "New York Mirror," Vol. X, p. 265; Dunlap, "History of the American Theatre," New York edition, p. 233, and "History of the Rise and Progress of the Arts of Design in the United States," Vol. I, p. 244. Unless otherwise indicated, the information in this chapter is obtained from the latter two works. See autobiographical section in each.

[2] W. A. Whitehead, "Contributions to the Early History of Perth Amboy and Adjoining Counties," New York, 1856, Chapter III.

[3] "American Theatre," p. 233.

teach the youth of Perth Amboy. While a new school-house, toward which Samuel Dunlap contributed six pounds, was building, classes were held in the court-house. The hours of instruction were 6 to 8, 10 to 12, and 3 to 6.[4]

For companions William had the family slaves, who petted, indulged, and spoiled him; and the soldiers of his father's old regiment, with whom the boy was a great favorite. But his chief friend and instructor was Thomas Bartow, "an aged man who lived almost the life of a hermit, having neither wife nor child."[5] He was a man of some means and occupied a comfortable house, surrounded by a fruit garden very attractive to a small boy. It was the only house in town without slaves. Between this old solitary and the child there grew up a close intimacy, productive of much good to one of them at least. William was permitted every Sunday to visit his venerable friend, with whom he was always sure of a welcome. The house and garden were at the youngster's command, and sometimes he achieved the dignity of riding behind "old Sorrel." From the lips of Thomas Bartow he first heard the stories of Troy and Latium, of Heaven and Hell, as commentaries on the pictures which excited his admiration in the old man's Homer and Vergil and Milton. Thus began the love of pictures and books which was to shape the lad's whole career. Soon he was able to read for himself, and Bartow's library became his

[4] Whitehead, pp. 291–3; "Arts of Design," Vol. I, p. 247.
[5] "American Theatre," p. 234.

delight. At the beginning of the Revolution Bartow withdrew to Pennsylvania, and William saw him no more. But Dunlap never forgot his debt to this kindly preceptor of his youth, nor neglected the opportunity to express his obligation.

In 1775, in company with his father, William first journeyed to New York. There he saw on every hand signs of the impending struggle. Weapons were for sale in the shop windows, and men were practising the use of arms in the streets. At Perth Amboy all was preparation for war. The townsmen formed themselves into a battalion. The boys in imitation organized a company, "The Governor's Guards," and paraded with wooden guns and swords. They assumed the character of rebels, and wore on their caps the motto, "Liberty or Death." Young William was a member of this band.[6] Whether his loyalist father gave him an object lesson in methods of quelling rebellion, he has not seen fit to record.

The Continentals began filling the village; the British appeared on the shore of Staten Island; a conflict was imminent. Accordingly the Dunlap family withdrew up the Raritan River to a place near New Brunswick. William spent the summer of 1776 in delicious freedom, rambling, fishing, swimming, and, rather precociously, reading Shakespeare and every other book he could lay his hands on.

After the occupation of Perth Amboy by the British, the family returned and spent the winter

[6] Whitehead, p. 328.

at home. Here William lived in the midst of soldiers of divers nations, English, Highland, Hessian, who thronged his father's house; and he saw all the abominations of a crowded camp. With admiring eyes he watched a detachment march proudly out of town to procure forage. As he recalled long after:

"In the evening it was known that this gallant military array were returning, their wagons loaded with wounded, instead of the booty they went in search of. By the fireside I heard the heavy rumbling of the wagons over the frozen earth, and the groans of those who were borne to the hospitals. I had now seen something of war."[7]

In the spring of 1777 Samuel Dunlap moved with his family to New York, the British headquarters. The city was to be the field of the future writer and painter's major activities. He was to see it grow into a metropolis of 300,000, but in 1777 New York was a town of not over 22,000 inhabitants. It stretched as far north as the present Grand Street in the older and more extensive eastern section, but only as far as Duane Street on the west. Beyond were swamps, farms, and pastures in which the citizens kept their cows. Along the southwest shore of the island lay the Battery, an earthwork about 1450 feet long, founded on the rocks, and mounted with guns. Behind this wall stood Fort George, a substantial piece of masonry; and immediately north of the fort was the Bowling

[7] "American Theatre," p. 237.

Green, a small oval park. Perhaps the most important and fashionable thoroughfare in the city was Wall Street. Queen Street (now Pearl) and Water Street were the main business sections, Broadway being of less prominence. The Bowery was a spacious avenue leading to the country, and lined with farm-houses and gardens. A number of the old Dutch houses, with gables to the street, were still to be found, but the prevailing type of residence was English. The city contained several fine mansions, surrounded by yards and gardens. The principal buildings were St. Paul's Church (Trinity was destroyed by fire in 1776), the City Hall, the Hospital, and King's College.[8]

Shortly after coming to New York, William witnessed his first play, "The Beaux' Stratagem." It was given by a company of English soldiers. But to him the actors were creatures of another world, and he abandoned himself to the splendid illusion.

The boy was again put to school, first under a man named Leslie and then under Thomas Steele, a Quaker, until an unfortunate accident brought his school days to an abrupt termination. Among the Amboy families which had taken up residence in New York was that of Andrew Elliot. It contained a large brood of children. One day in the spring of 1778 William dined with them, and after dinner the boys engaged in a mimic battle of chips.

[8] "American Theatre," pp. 39–41; T. E. V. Smith, "The City of New York in the Year of Washington's Inauguration, 1789," New York, 1889, Chapter I; F. B. Hough, "Statistics of Population of the City and County of New York," New York, 1866.

A missile struck the guest's right eye. He was carried home and given careful treatment, but to no purpose, for the sight of the eye had been totally destroyed. By this mishap he was temporarily deprived of his three favorite amusements: the theatre, reading, and drawing.

His health restored, William began helping in the looking-glass and china store which his father had established in New York. Apparently his duties were not onerous, since he found time for much reading, the acquisition of a little French, and two attempts at dramatic composition,—one on the story of Abou Hassan in the "Arabian Nights," and the other a tragedy on some incidents in Persian history. He likewise tried copying prints, at which he gained so much proficiency that his father was impressed and sought out a teacher. The teacher disappeared after a few lessons; but the boy thought he had learned enough art to attempt portraits, and he prevailed on his indulgent parent to act as his first subject. Soon he was sketching strangers in crayon at three guineas a head. Thus at the age of sixteen he became a professional portraitist. His first oil was a tavern sign representing Sir Samuel Hood, painted to attract the custom of sailors.

The declaration of peace in 1783 left Dunlap free to return to his native State. Though he had passed the last six years in the stronghold of the loyalists, he emerged an ardent American. While visiting the Van Hornes at Rocky Hill near Princeton, where Congress was sitting, his patriotism was

greatly stimulated by a sight of Washington. One day, as he walked between Princeton and Trenton, he saw a party of military horsemen approaching.

"The center figure was the tallest of the group, and I knew that I saw in him the man on whom every thought centered. The eyes of the company were turned upon me as they approached. The salutation of taking off my cocked hat was performed with a feeling which probably my face expressed. Instantly the salute was returned in the same manner by the chief, and every hat in the company was lowered with its waving plume to me. They passed, and I gazed after them. It was a precious moment. I had seen Washington."[9]

Dunlap was soon privileged to meet the great man on more intimate terms at the Van Horne mansion. Washington commended him for his painting and his flute-playing, and the boy was supremely happy. At Mr. Van Horne's request, General and Mrs. Washington sat for their portraits. The result in the case of Washington was a very flat and wooden crayon picture, showing that the young artist had not yet mastered the secrets of perspective and characterization.[10] In the winter of 1783–4 he made a full-length oil portrait of Washington on the battle-field of Princeton, with much smoke and many soldiers in the background. While thus engaged, Dunlap breakfasted and dined every day at headquarters with the

[9] "American Theatre," pp. 238–9.

[10] There is an engraving of this portrait by Augustus Robin.

Washingtons and members of Congress. Washington impressed him as reserved but not austere, unaffectedly dignified and habitually polite. Once he saw the General laugh heartily when he rode in unexpectedly upon the portly John Van Horne, who, having just finished a hard race with his prospective dinner in the shape of an elusive pig, rose from the struggle with the squealing animal in his arms to find himself face to face with the Commander in Chief.

The elder Dunlap, with his usual indulgence, had decided that William should be sent to London, the Mecca of early American seekers after culture, to learn art under the great Benjamin West. The winter was spent in preparation which consisted of the study of French and dancing, and much attention to billiard-playing, card-parties, balls, and sleigh-rides.

On the 4th of May, 1784, the aspirant sailed for England on the good ship *Betsy,* taking with him as credentials the full-length Washington and a copy from Copley. Upon his arrival at London about the middle of June, Dunlap hastened to introduce himself to West, and to display his pictures, which were mildly praised. He established himself in two rooms in Rathbone Place, and after a sufficiency of sight-seeing, settled to sketching from a pair of busts. The drawings gained him permission to enter the academy at Somerset House, a privilege of which he did not avail himself because of bashfulness. When winter came he reveled in the theatres and saw most of the suc-

cessful dramas of the day, including "The School for Scandal" and "The Critic" with the original casts. The Bannisters, Kemble, Mrs. Jordan, and Henderson were his admiration, but to the divine Siddons he paid complete homage. "At this time," he said, "she was in her prime, and her face and figure as perfect as her acting."[11]

So far as art study was concerned, Dunlap protested that he accomplished almost nothing the first year, partly because of the attraction of other interests, partly because of a protracted illness from abscesses. With the return of health came an overflow of spirits. He was eager for any indulgence his friends might suggest, and the theatre, excursions, port wine, and dinners occupied his days and nights. Among his associates in frivolity West's son, Raphael, was one of the most intimate. The American fell in with an eating and drinking club, with which he became a favorite because of his wit and ability to sing a good song. Benjamin West, whom he now saw only on rare occasions, finding him indifferent to art, abandoned him to his fate.

During his sojourn in England, Dunlap made only two trips into the interior. With a friend he visited Stamford in Lincolnshire, where he saw some fine pictures at the near-by Burleigh House. The natives were astonished to find an American who was neither black nor copper-colored. In the autumn of 1786 he undertook a walking expedition to Oxford with Samuel L. Mitchill, a New Yorker

[11] "American Theatre," p. 241.

who had just completed a medical course at Edinburgh. Equipped with the absolute necessities, they set out on a rainy morning in November. Over heavy roads they trudged with light hearts to the ancient university town. They were warmly received by the students, to whom two genuine Americans were objects of no little interest. They dined in the college halls, drank wine in the students' chambers, were shown about the town, and in general learned "as much of University life as a week's residence could teach" them.[12] A day was spent at Marlborough's estate, Blenheim, which contained an excellent collection of the works of Rubens and other great painters. The return trip was accomplished on foot via Windsor, where the king and royal family were gazed upon in the chapel.

Apparently the elder Dunlap had begun to suspect that his son was enjoying a rare good time at his expense without achieving the object for which he was sent. In consequence an unexpected summons caused William to embark for his native land in August, 1787. The voyage required seven weeks, which he whiled away by making portraits of the captain, and by helping to repaint the ship's figure-head. The traveler returned but little wiser and less stalwart in character than when he left, so he frankly admitted. Indeed, so far as art study was concerned, he seems to have done little enough during his three years abroad. Had he applied himself diligently to his easel and taken more ad-

[12] "American Theatre," p. 244.

vantage of the instruction and guidance which West freely offered, he undoubtedly would have been a much better painter than he ever became. Yet in spite of indolence, the foreign residence formed a valuable part of Dunlap's preparation for after life. He did not entirely neglect art; and he profited greatly by the opportunity to study West's methods, which he later imitated with some success. By viewing numerous collections of the masters, he acquired a more accurate standard for self-criticism than he could have obtained in this country. His frequent attendance at the theatre was invaluable to the future director of the New York stage. Not only did he become familiar with the best contemporary plays and actors, but also with methods of presentation. As important a gain as any was the broadened outlook on the world's culture, without which he would have been but ill prepared to direct, as in some slight measure he one day was to direct, the culture of the new nation. If his character suffered some bumps and bruises in the process, the injury was not irreparable, for his later life was as impeccable as one could desire.

Back in New York, Dunlap installed himself in his father's house as a portrait painter, an occupation which did not seriously interfere with his leisure, though he was almost the only portraitist the city possessed. The theatre claimed his major interest and soon enlisted his pen. The glories of the English stage were fresh in his memory, and the recent success of "The Contrast" by the Ameri-

can Tyler[13] was still a subject of comment. Thus doubly inspired, Dunlap, in the course of a few weeks, composed "The Modest Soldier; or, Love in New York," a five-act comedy. His friends praised it warmly. Undoubtedly it would prove a triumph on the boards. But the problem was "to approach those awful personages, the managers." The gap was bridged by the good offices of an English actor then residing in New York. To him the play was read over a bottle of Madeira, and pronounced, perhaps in consideration of the bottle, "excellent, wanted a little pruning, but far less than 'She Stoops to Conquer,' when Goldsmith read it to us in the green-room."[14] An introduction to the managers, Hallam and Henry, was now forthcoming. The comedy was read to them and accepted. Yet its appearance was postponed from month to month, much to the author's mystification until he discovered the reason to be that there were no parts suited to Henry and his wife. Thus ended the first chapter of Dunlap's dramatic career.

But he did not entirely forsake his studio. One product of this period still survives in the collection of the New York Historical Society, a painting made in 1788 which represents himself showing a picture to his parents. It is a poorly drawn affair, yet it is interesting as an early portrait of the painter. At this time also he took up etching, a branch of art of which he made very

[13] See *post*, pp. 133 ff.
[14] "American Theatre," pp. 77–8.

little use; but when Tyler's "Contrast" was published in 1790, it contained as frontispiece a badly drawn Dunlap etching of one of the scenes.

Possessing as he did the power to attract people of widely different temperaments, William Dunlap was always blest with numerous good friends. Soon after his return from England he became a member of the Philological Society, a literary organization formed for mutual instruction and improvement,—then a popular type of social group. Among his fellow-members were Noah Webster and Samuel Mitchill. This association stimulated in him more regular habits of study and a desire for literary achievement. He planned an epic on Aristomenes and wrote some hundred verses. But other friends he had, of a less serious turn of mind, who persuaded him to join the Masons and the Black Friars. The latter was a society established in 1784 for social, charitable, and humane purposes; but its influence, as well as that of the Masons, would seem to have been not altogether on the side of virtue, for Dunlap said he was saved from their contamination only by marriage.[15]

The "New York Daily Gazette" of Monday, February 16, 1789, contained this news item:

"On Tuesday last was married, by the Revd. Mr. Moore, Mr. WILLIAM DUNLAP, an eminent Portrait Painter, and Member of the Philological Society, only son of Mr. Samuel Dunlap, Merchant,

[15] "New York Directory," 1793, p. 235; "Arts of Design," Vol. I, p. 267.

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The artist displaying one of his paintings to his parents
By William Dunlap

Queen-Street, to the amiable and accomplished Miss NABBY WOOLSEY, of Fairfield, in Connecticut."

Miss Nabby, Betsey, or Elizabeth Woolsey was descended from an old New York family, the English founder of which came to New Amsterdam in 1623, and became a prosperous trader. Of this line was Benjamin Woolsey, who graduated from Yale, and reared a large family, including Elizabeth, born in 1768. He died in 1771, leaving the family in financial embarrassment.[16] Dunlap's marriage brought him into association with Elizabeth's brother-in-law, Timothy Dwight, later president of Yale. From him Dunlap received much intellectual inspiration. Thanks to the new relationships, he was now saved from "inevitable destruction."[17]

About this time the Philological Society died, and from its ashes sprang the Friendly Club, which became one of the leading literary circles of New York. It numbered among its members Elihu Hubbard Smith, William Johnson, Samuel Latham Mitchill, Samuel Miller, Anthony Bleecker, William Walton Woolsey, John Wells, James Kent, and William Dunlap. Nearly all these young men were college graduates with a strong

[16] For genealogy of the Woolsey family see Walter Barrett, "The Old Merchants of New York City," New York, 1885; Benjamin W. Dwight, "History of the Descendants of John Dwight of Dedham, Massachusetts," New York, 1874; Elizabeth Woolsey Howland, "Family Records," 1900.

[17] "Arts of Design," Vol. I, p. 267.

interest in cultural pursuits, and their influence on the development of Dunlap's mind must have been very beneficial.[18] The club, which was rather typical of those organizations by which our early citizens sought to appease their intellectual cravings, met every Tuesday evening at the homes of the members in rotation. The host read from a favorite author and directed a discussion of the passage, after which light refreshments were served. It is said that George Washington was a frequent visitor at these weekly sessions. The Friendlies projected several literary works, and

[18] This group was unusual in the distinctions which came to its members subsequently. Smith became the center of the literary society of New York. He published several works, and as a physician helped found, and for a time edited, the "Medical Repository." Johnson was a lawyer, and was for many years the reporter for the Supreme Court of the State. He was a classical scholar and editor of legal works. Mitchill was a physician, surgeon-general of the State, a scientist of eminence, a professor at Columbia, a United States senator, a man of advanced ideas, a leader in all civic and philanthropic enterprises, and the author of several works. Miller became a prominent theologian and polemical writer, and a professor at Princeton. Bleecker was a lawyer, a prolific contributor to periodicals, a founder of the New York Historical Society, a patron of arts and letters, and a leader in public affairs. Woolsey was Dunlap's brother-in-law. He entered the hardware business, and became a wealthy man. He was the father of Theodore Dwight Woolsey, president of Yale. Wells was a prominent lawyer who was associated with Hamilton in bringing out the "Federalist." Kent gained more permanent distinction than any other member of the club. As chief justice of the Supreme Court of the State, and chancellor of New York, and as the author of "Commentaries on American Law," he was one of the chief founders of American jurisprudence.

actually maintained at different times a magazine and a review, to both of which Dunlap contributed. The society continued its existence until annihilated by political differences about 1800.[19]

Dunlap's first ill-fated attempt at drama had met with sufficient praise to call forth a second comedy, written sometime in 1788. Having parts suited to Henry and his wife, it was readily accepted by that gentleman, and exposed to the smoky glare of the tallow footlights in the fall of 1789. The newspaper advertisement was thus worded:

The public are reſpectfully informed that the THEATRE will be opened on MONDAY, the 7th of September, with a COMEDY, never yet performed, (written by a gentleman of this city), called,

The FATHER,
Or, American Shandyiſm.
The Prologue by Mr. WIGNELL.—The Epilogue by Mrs. HENRY.
To which will be added a FARCE, called,
Who's the Dupe.
HALLAM and HENRY.[20]

[19] See "American Theatre," p. 114; "New York Mirror," Vol. X, p. 265; Martha J. Lamb, "History of the City of New York: Its Origin, Rise and Progress," New York and Chicago, 1877–80, Vol. II, p. 519; "Monthly Recorder," April, 1813; James Grant Wilson, "Memorial History of the City of New York," New York, 1893, Vol. IV, p. 233. Mrs. Lamb, Vol. II, p. 468, speaks also of a Drone Club to which Dunlap belonged at about this time, with almost the same membership as the Friendly Club.

[20] "Daily Advertiser," September 5, 1789.

The play was glowingly announced by the "Daily Gazette" of August 26:

"The town is, at present, in very great expectation of seeing a comedy, now in rehearsal, which is a production of a gentleman in this place, much celebrated for his wit and humor; besides his great ability in the Dramatick, he has a peculiar talent in the Lyrick way of writing, and that in a manner wholly new and unknown. As soon as three hundred Shandean subscribers are obtained, the work will be put to the press."

"The Father" was given seven times altogether, which was doing very well for an American play.[21] Except "The Contrast," no other had fared so well; according to existing standards, therefore, it was a success. Dunlap said the flattering reception of the comedy fixed his attention upon drama. He may even have meditated becoming an actor; in the opinion of Ireland he probably would have done so but for the loss of his eye.

[21] Given four times in quick succession at New York; appeared at Philadelphia in February, 1790, and again in January, 1791; and at Baltimore in September, 1790. My information concerning the performance of Dunlap's plays throughout this chapter is obtained from his "American Theatre"; from G. O. Seilhamer, "History of the American Theatre," Philadelphia, 1888–91, Vols. I, II, III; J. N. Ireland, "Records of the New York Stage from 1750 to 1860," New York, 1866, Vols. I, II; and especially from the contemporary issues of the "New York Gazette," the "Evening Post," and the "Commercial Advertiser." For the publication of Dunlap's plays see bibliography, *post*, pp. 284 ff.

Duyckinck is my authority for the statement that he actually appeared on the stage once about 1795.[22]

The budding dramatist was now in some demand as a writer of theatrical pieces. Aside from two prologues in the fall of 1789, he wrote, at the request of the comedian Wignell, an interlude called "Darby's Return," which was given at the actor's benefit on November 24.[23] This trifle has become associated with Washington because of the author's careful account of its effect on him when he attended its representation. At the lines alluding to the new Federal Constitution, the great man deigned to smile. When he himself became the subject of *Darby's* narrative, "the president looked serious; and when Kathleen asked, 'How looked he, Darby? Was he short or tall?' his countenance showed embarrassment, from the expectation of one of those eulogiums which he had been obliged to hear on many public occasions, and which must doubtless have been a severe trial to his feelings; but Darby's answer that he had *not seen him,* because he had mistaken a man 'all lace and glitter, botherum and shine' for him until all the show had passed, relieved the hero from apprehension of further personality, and he in-

[22] Introduction to the play in the "Dramatic Works of William Dunlap," Vol. I; Ireland, Vol. I, p. 80; Evert A. Duyckinck, "Cyclopædia of American Literature," Philadelphia, 1881, Vol. I, p. 560.

[23] Performed three or four times at New York, once as late as November, 1796; given twice at Philadelphia, in 1790 and 1791.

dulged in that which was with him extremely rare, a hearty laugh."[24]

Ever since his return from England, portrait-painting had been Dunlap's ostensible occupation, but his sitters, never numerous, were becoming fewer, and it was painfully apparent that art as a means of livelihood for the young couple must be abandoned. Play-writing was still more precarious. Again Samuel Dunlap came to the aid of his son by taking him into his business as a partner. Thus the devotee of art and letters became transformed into a storekeeper.[25] That Samuel had prospered as an importer of china and looking-glasses is evident from his ability to maintain the old homestead in Perth Amboy, to send William abroad for three years, and subsequently to support an artist and his family in the household. The nature of the stock which William was now called upon to handle may be seen from the firm's advertisement:

> Samuel Dunlap, and Son,
> No. 13, Queen Street, have for ſale,
> *An aſſortment of cut and plain Glaſs*
> VASE LAMPS, LOOKING GLASSES,
> and aſſortment of China, including table ſets, tea ſets, &c. An aſſortment of green and blue edged Ware, in ſets or ſeparate. Hyſon and Souchong tea.[26]

[24] "American Theatre," pp. 84–5.

[25] The change probably occurred early in 1790, since the New York Directory for 1789 mentions the store as Samuel Dunlap's, and for 1790 as Dunlap & Son's.

[26] "Daily Advertiser," October 21, 1790.

This partnership was terminated within two years by the death of the senior member. The exact date of this event I have not been able to learn, but the will was probated on January 4, 1792, which indicates that he died at the close of the previous year.[27] With his father Dunlap lost his truest friend. Always solicitous for his welfare and progress, confident of his ability, and patient with his failures, Samuel Dunlap gave his son every opportunity to make the most of himself.

The business was now conducted by the remaining partner alone for a short time. About the beginning of 1793 one of the Woolseys was taken into the firm, and he continued his connection for three years. In 1796 he was supplanted by Moses Judah.[28] The business may have been partly of an itinerant nature; at any rate, Dunlap made occasional visits to Boston, Philadelphia, and other cities for commercial purposes.

One of his first acts after his father's death was to free the family slaves, retaining some as hired servants. He was active in the Manumission Society, and this deed proved the sincerity of his pretensions. In 1793 he became a trustee of the free school for African children.[29] This institution was founded in 1789 by the Manumission Society. In 1793 its enrollment was eighty-two. A

[27] "Collections of the New York Historical Society for 1905," p. 191. The will left everything to the testator's wife.

[28] See directories for those years.

[29] Directory for 1793.

master and mistress were appointed to teach the "three R's" and domestic pursuits to negro children of both sexes. A board of twelve trustees was chosen from the society, whose duty it was to inspect the school every month, and recommend such measures as seemed necessary.[30]

Dunlap had now become a paterfamilias. The first child, John Alexander Bredin, was born December 14, 1789. Margaret Ann was born April 15, 1791; and a second daughter, Hester Mary, was born August 26, 1792, but lived only a year.[31]

A very important event in Dunlap's biography was the arrival of Charles Brockden Brown from Philadelphia in 1793. He was soon taken into the Friendly Club, and between him and Dunlap developed a life-long friendship. Brown was twenty-two years old, weak in body but very alert in mind, full of literary ambition and radical ideas. He took up residence with E. H. Smith and William Johnson in bachelor quarters, the resort of the Friendlies. He divided his time among his friends, "sleeping at Bachelor's Hall, and otherwise domesticated in the family of the author of 'The Father'; until a long and severe illness rendered it necessary to remove him altogether to the house of the latter."[32] A close bond of fellowship was formed among these four young men, and especially between Brown and Dunlap, who

[30] "New York Magazine; or, Literary Repository," Vol. IV, p. 258.
[31] Dunlap family Bible.
[32] "American Theatre," pp. 143–4.

not only lived so intimately in New York, but also frequently summered together at Perth Amboy.[33]

Dunlap's commercial, benevolent, and social activities did not curb his dramatic endeavors. In the spring of 1793 "The Miser's Wedding," a comedy, "was played without study or rehearsal. . . . The piece was murdered (it deserved death) and never heard of more."[34] On the 24th of April, 1794, a tragedy, "The Fatal Deception; or, The Progress of Guilt," written in 1790, was brought out before a large and favorably disposed audience.[35] It was given for the benefit of John Hodgkinson. As an additional attraction the playwright composed an interlude, "Shelty's Travels," which was spoken by the actor on this occasion, and continued in use as late as 1802.

Dunlap's literary adventures were not confined to the drama. He also essayed poetry and gained some slight distinction, since two of his poems were included beside the work of Joel Barlow and Philip Freneau in a volume of "American Poems, Selected and Original," edited by E. H. Smith and published at Litchfield, Connecticut, in 1793. These two poems reappeared the next year in "The Columbian Muse," printed at New York. One was "Cololoo—An Indian Tale" of thirty

[33] Dunlap, "Life of Brown," Philadelphia edition, Vol. I, p. 56.

[34] "American Theatre," p. 103. It was sometimes referred to as "The Wedding."

[35] Repeated in May, given at Philadelphia the next October, and revived at New York in April, 1795, with considerable alteration.

quatrains; the other, "Ella—A Norwegian Tale," of about the same length. Both are smooth and rather spirited, but labored and artificial in diction. Two stanzas from "Ella" will illustrate:

"Bright came the morn! and bright in batter'd arms
The rustic vet'rans came;
And many a youth, untried in rough alarms,
Now hop'd a patriot's name.

They hear'd from far the hum of Sivard's host;
Young Eric struck his shield;
Then high in air his heavy spear he tost,
And blaz'd along the field."

Dunlap was now well launched on the career of a dramatist. Already he had given the stage more plays than any other native writer, and from this time on for a decade he was to remain the most prolific contributor. In the middle of February, 1795, his second tragedy, "Fontainville Abbey," written the previous year, was presented with Mr. and Mrs. Hodgkinson in the leading parts. The staging seems to have been quite elaborate. The piece was not announced as the work of an American because the author felt that such an avowal would injure it. That American contempt for the literature of this country was no idle fancy of Dunlap's was amply proved by the experience of many contemporary writers, dramatic and otherwise. As late as 1820 James Fenimore Cooper attempted to give currency to his first novel by publishing it as an English work,

American authors still being lightly esteemed. None the less, "Fontainville Abbey" was warmly praised; writer, manager, actors, and scene-painter were all highly commended. On February 23 it was repeated under very adverse circumstances. The villain was sick, and the actor who undertook the part was compelled to read his lines from the book, a procedure which naturally disconcerted the whole company. As if this were not a sufficient handicap, the fifth act was disturbed by an alarm of fire. At the third performance all this was changed; it was as perfectly represented, so it was said, as any tragedy seen on the New York stage for many years.[36]

Biographical information for this period is scant, but Dunlap was doubtless occupied for the greater part of the time in managing the store and in writing. Somewhere he had picked up a little German. In the "New York Magazine; or, Literary Repository" of December, 1795, appeared "The Zephyrs, An Idyl. (Translated from the German of Gesner [*sic*], by W. Dunlap.)" In the January number of the same publication was printed his translation of Gessner's "First Idyl." A sentence will show the quality of the rendering:

"Let me the pitcher, too heavy a load for thee, to thy cottage carry."

At this point in his career, Dunlap's affairs were in a promising condition. His financial circum-

[36] "New York Magazine; or, Literary Repository," Vol. VI, pp. 67–9, 130.

stances were comfortable, he was gaining a name as a competent dramatist and man of letters, and he was enjoying the companionship of two friends, E. H. Smith and C. B. Brown, who were as much interested in literature as he. Smith was engaged in writing an opera, and Brown in projecting novels. Dunlap was also preparing an opera, "The Archers," on the story of William Tell. It was produced at the New York Theatre on April 18, 1796, with music composed by Benjamin Carr.[37]

In the spring of this year Dunlap took the most fateful step of his life, a step which determined his whole future. In his own words:

"About this time, Hodgkinson pressed upon the author of The Father of an Only Child, . . . a purchase of his half in the concerns of the theatre, with the tempting bait of having the sole control of the pieces to be brought before the public. The proposition was made on the 19th of March. The bait took. The enthusiastic dramatist seriously persuaded himself that it was his duty to take the direction of so powerful an engine as the stage; his thoughts at the time lay open before me. 'If the effects of the stage are as great as its friends and enemies have concurred in representing it, surely I should have the power to do much

[37] Repeated twice at New York. In October, 1797, it was given twice at Boston. The music of the opera is now lost except for two small portions, one of which, a song, is reproduced in Sonneck's "Early Opera in America," opposite p. 99.

good.' The power of the engine is certain; his power to direct it he ought to have doubted."

He was informed that the theatre had cleared between $4000 and $5000 in the last six weeks. This and the control of the leading stage in the United States, "not forgetting the power to bring out his own plays," proved irresistible, and arrangements were made for him to assume his responsibilities about the first of May. But Dunlap's statement that he was urged to purchase Hodgkinson's half of the business is somewhat misleading, for it appears that he acquired only half of the latter's share, so that he and Hodgkinson each owned a fourth interest in the theatre, while Hallam held the remainder. As to the price, we are only told that the purchaser was to set the value of the property with unlimited time for payment; but the year before, Hodgkinson had offered to sell out for $12,500.[38]

II

THE situation which confronted the new director can best be understood with the aid of a few facts concerning the previous history of the American theatre. There has been considerable difference of opinion as to the beginning of the histrionic art in this country, but Mr. O. G. Sonneck, who has the latest word on the subject, says that Tony Aston, an English actor, performed at Charleston

[38] "American Theatre," pp. 138, 148; see *post*, pp. 44 ff.

in 1703, and at New York in 1703–4.[39] In 1714 a play was attempted at Boston, but it met the opposition of Chief Justice Sewall. Williamsburg, Virginia, witnessed an unidentified play as early as 1718, and a theatre is known to have existed there by 1722.[40] Whether this was a structure erected expressly for drama cannot be said. New York's first company seems to have been a professional body from London, which held forth between 1732 and 1734, giving on three nights a week such plays as "The Recruiting Officer," "The Beaux' Stratagem," and "Cato." Their theatre was an upper room near the corner of Pearl Street and Maiden Lane; in it a platform stage and about four hundred raised seats had been constructed.[41] In 1735–6 Charleston was the scene of activity of an anonymous company, which gave "The Orphan," "George Barnwell," and other plays, at a charge of 40 shillings a seat. In 1736 a new theatre, apparently put up especially for dramatic purposes, was opened in Dock Street.[42] Philadelphia's first theatrical experiment seems to have been made by a semi-professional company which gave "Cato" in August, 1749, and probably remained until suppressed by the magistrates as a public menace. The same company is thought to

[39] "Early Opera in America," 1915, p. 7.

[40] C. P. Daly, "First Theatre in America," Publications of the Dunlap Society, second series, No. 1, 1896, pp. 16, 21–3.

[41] T. A. Brown, "History of the New York Stage," New York, 1903, Vol. I, p. 1.

[42] Daly, pp. 49–53.

have gone to New York in 1750, and to have stayed over a year.[43] The Thespians took possession of a room in a wooden building on Nassau (then Kip) Street, belonging to Rip Van Dam. This second New York theatre was thus described by T. A. Brown:

"It was a two-storied house, with high gables. The stage was raised five feet from the floor. The scenes, curtains, and wings were all carried by the managers in their 'property' trunks. A green curtain was suspended from the ceiling. A pair of paper screens were erected upon the right and left hand sides, for wings. Six wax lights were in front of the stage. The orchestra consisted of a German flute, horn, and drum players. Suspended from the ceiling was the chandelier, made of a barrel hoop, through which were driven half a dozen nails, into which were stuck so many candles. Two drop scenes, representing a castle and a wood, bits of landscape, river, and mountain, comprised the scenery."[44]

The room contained a pit and gallery, and later boxes, and had a capacity of about three hundred. The admission was 8 shillings to the boxes, 5 shillings to the pit, and 3 shillings to the gallery.[45] (In New York eight shillings was then the equivalent of one dollar.)

[43] G. O. Seilhamer, "History of the American Theatre," Vol. I, pp. 2–4; Brown, Vol. I, p. 2.
[44] "History of the New York Stage," Vol. I, p. 2.
[45] Daly, pp. 4–5.

Perhaps the most important event in the early history of the American theatre was the arrival of the Hallam Company in 1752. So significant was this occurrence that Dunlap began his chronicles of the stage at this point, ignoring all that had preceded it. William Hallam, manager of a minor London theatre, became bankrupt in 1750, and resolved to try his fortunes in the New World. He collected a band of about a dozen actors of no distinction, placed them under the direction of his brother Lewis, himself an actor, and sent them across the Atlantic. Their repertory consisted of perhaps twenty-four dramas, mostly Shakespearian and Restoration, and eight or ten farces. The troupe landed in Virginia, probably choosing the cavalier South as more favorable to the profession than the puritan North. They proceeded to Williamsburg, where they inaugurated their career with "The Merchant of Venice" on September 5, 1752. An old store-house, rehabilitated, did duty as a theatre, and in lieu of an orchestra a lone harpsichord dispensed music.

The next fall Hallam's players transferred their activities to New York. A new theatre was erected in Nassau Street for their reception, the first building constructed in the city expressly for dramatic exhibitions. The season extended from September to March; the playing nights were Monday, Wednesday and Friday; the performances began at 6 o'clock; the price of admission was soon fixed at 6, 4, and 2 shillings.[46]

[46] Seilhamer, Vol. I, p. 46.

In 1754 Hallam attempted to invade Philadelphia, but the Quakers petitioned the governor to prohibit "profane stage-plays." Permission was finally granted the company to open a theatre on the condition that they offer "nothing indecent and immoral," that they devote one night's receipts to the poor, and that the manager give security for the payment of all debts contracted. The last stipulation clearly indicates the suspicion in which actors were held in many localities; indeed their status was often little better than that of vagrants. Vigorous opposition continued throughout the whole season of ten weeks. Pamphlets were distributed, and every effort was made to show the evils attendant upon the theatre, but the company prospered none the less.

Lewis Hallam was succeeded upon his death by David Douglass, who erected a new play-house on Cruger's Wharf in New York. He did so without the permission of the authorities, and when he tried to open the doors in 1758 the privilege was denied him. He then advertised a "Histrionic Academy" in which he "proposed to deliver dissertations on subjects *moral, instructive,* and *entertaining,* and to endeavor to qualify such as would favour him with attendance *to speak in public with propriety.*"[47] This ruse failed to blind the eyes of the magistrates, but eventually permission for a brief season was granted.

Douglass's actors, like all the early companies, were literally a band of strollers. They carried

[47] "American Theatre," pp. 18–19.

their simple equipment with them and moved about the country as they saw fit. There were no theatrical magnates with whom they might make advance arrangements. Uninvited they entered whatever town they chose, picked out the most likely substitute for a play-house, set up their dingy canvas world, and dispensed the riches of Shakespeare and Otway and Congreve until it seemed expedient for them to move on.

Being the chief purveyors of drama to the colonies, the Douglass troupe of barn-stormers embraced in its itinerary the extremes of Newport and Williamsburg, and besides New York, Philadelphia, and Annapolis, visited many smaller towns where the court-house or other building was compelled to serve as a theatre. In general the actors were regarded as folk outside the pale of normal moral restrictions, from whom only evil conduct was to be expected. In reality their deportment seems to have been sufficiently correct, and it was their custom to give a benefit for the poor to allay ill-will. One annoyance from which the players suffered was the presence of intruders behind the scenes and even on the stage. Sometimes the number on the stage was so large as to interrupt the performance. In return the actors imposed an inconvenience on the public by going from house to house, soliciting patronage for their benefit nights. Both practices disappeared before Dunlap's time.

In 1761 Douglass erected a theatre in Beekman (then Chapel) Street, New York. Five years

later, during the stamp-act troubles, the populace stormed the house and wrecked it.[48] Whether prompted by the monarchical sympathy of the players or by some other cause, this wanton destruction of their property indicates that the legal status of the profession was very low. But, nothing daunted, the next year Douglass built a new house in John Street. Dunlap, who began his career in this structure, described it thus:

"It was principally of wood; an unsightly object, painted red. . . . It was about 60 feet back from the street, having a covered way of rough wooden material from the pavement to the doors. . . . Two rows of boxes, with a pit and gallery, could accommodate all the play-going people of that time, and yield to the sharers eight hundred dollars when full, at the usual prices. The stage was of good dimensions."[49]

The dressing-rooms and greenroom were in an adjacent shed.[50] I infer that the capacity of the house was about one thousand. It was opened in December of 1767 with the popular "Beaux' Stratagem." On this occasion John Henry, who had failed of success in London, made his first New York appearance. He was handsome and capable, and eventually attained an important station in the theatrical affairs of this country. The leading player in the American Company, as it

[48] Seilhamer, Vol. I, pp. 141–2.
[49] "American Theatre," p. 28.
[50] Seilhamer, Vol. I, p. 212.

was now called, was Lewis Hallam the second, who at the age of twelve had come in the original expedition with his father and mother, and had been almost reared on the stage.

When it became evident that a break with the mother country was unavoidable, Congress, desiring to direct all resources toward the national welfare, recommended that gaming, cock-fighting, and play-acting be discouraged,—such company the theatre kept in colonial eyes. Accordingly Douglass shipped his troupe to the West Indies to await more peaceable times.

During the Revolution, the English soldiers were our only actors. Among other horrors of war, puritan Boston was compelled to abide the presence of a makeshift play-house with Burgoyne at its head. Philadelphia maintained a body of soldier-actors with John André as scene-painter. The John Street Theatre in New York was kept open almost throughout the struggle by British amateurs, to the delight of the youthful Dunlap.[51]

When the American Company returned, it was opposed on moral and patriotic grounds. In 1785, however, under the new managers Hallam and Henry, an opening was finally effected in New York, but during the season attacks by pulpit and press were unremitting. Indeed the clergy so inflamed the people that there were threats of demolishing the theatre. But the opponents contented themselves with the milder protest of a memorial signed by seven hundred persons, asking

[51] Seilhamer, Vol. II, Chapters II–III.

the legislature to abolish theatres. This was met by a counter memorial with fourteen hundred signatures. In the City of Brotherly Love, whither the company repaired in 1788, the atmosphere was so uncongenial that the performances were advertised "gratis," and the plays were disguised by moral captions: thus, "She Stoops to Conquer" became "Improper Education"; "Hamlet," "Filial Piety"; "Richard III," "The Fate of Tyranny." And even then the house seems to have been closed by the authorities. But the next year the drama won a significant victory in the repeal of the prohibitory law.[52]

A few years later a similar victory was won in Boston. There acting had been forbidden by law since 1750, when some audacious individuals tried to perform "The Orphan." In 1792 a still more audacious group defied the magistrates and erected a temporary play-house. It was innocently called the "New Exhibition Room," and programs consisting of songs, acrobatic feats, and dances were given. Emboldened by the apparent indifference of the officials, these daring spirits next attempted dramas, advertised as moral lectures. After several weeks of impunity, the county sheriff "unexpectedly made his first appearance on that stage," and arrested the offenders. But in the ensuing year the restrictive ordinance was revoked, a substantial building was constructed, and the Boston stage became a permanent institution.[53]

[52] Seilhamer, Vol. II, pp. 190, 244–59.

[53] W. W. Clapp, "A Record of the Boston Stage," Boston, 1853, pp. 1–18.

From 1792 theatrical conditions in the leading cities improved rapidly. In that year Thomas Wignell, a prominent comedian, withdrew from New York and organized a company in Philadelphia, which, recruited from England, surpassed its northern rival. He entered into partnership with A. Reinagle and undertook the construction of a play-house much larger and finer than any other in America. Hallam and Henry also reinforced their company with several new actors from England, chief among whom were John Hodgkinson and his wife.

Hodgkinson, who was destined to play so important a part in Dunlap's affairs, had risen as high as the Bath Theatre before crossing the Atlantic. He was an actor of great energy and versatility, equally capable in comic, tragic, and singing rôles. He became the favorite of the public, and the bane of the other first-line players, who were compelled to relinquish their principal parts to the newcomer. Mrs. Hodgkinson was almost as valuable an addition as her husband. Personally attractive and possessing a good voice, she made opera her forte, though she was far above mediocrity in comedy and tragedy. Hodgkinson soon proved a Tartar to the John Street partners. Relations were already strained between them, and the new man's high-handed methods caused a complete rupture. Henry, who saw himself and his wife, with the treacherous Hallam's concurrence, being driven from their

position, sold his share of the stock to Hodgkinson in 1794 and left the stage.

Hallam and Hodgkinson were now masters of the north, while Wignell and Reinagle controlled the situation farther south. The American Company was stronger than it had ever been, and the Philadelphia actors were the best group the country had yet possessed. Both companies seem to have been prospering and enjoying much public good-will. The theatre had overcome the most violent faction of its enemies: Boston had been successfully invaded, Philadelphia had repealed its prohibition, and New York was to see no more organized opposition. At this propitious period Dunlap's connection with the business began.[54]

A few general statements concerning the theatrical customs and methods which obtained at this time, especially at New York, and we shall take up the narrative of the new manager's experiences. The company was a permanent group much like a modern opera company. It was attached to some theatre, which it considered its home, and where it gave performances the greater part of the year. At other times it visited elsewhere as a whole or in sections. The manager (or managers in case of partnership), who was usually an actor, was not the hired servant of a body of owners or promoters, but was the ultimate director and dictator of affairs. He owned or rented

[54] I have mentioned only those companies and cities which were especially important in the development of our theatre.

the house and its equipment, chose and cast the plays, hired the actors, arranged the salaries, and in general was monarch of the mimic world.

The great majority of the players came from England, where they had served in the minor theatres. None, of course, had left positions of distinction in the mother country to try their uncertain fate in the New World, but frequently they developed into competent performers. Many of them were young players who had come at the invitation of the managers, some were soldiers of fortune, and a few were veterans who had outlived their reputations at home. Until 1791 it was the practice of the American Company to pay its actors with shares of the profits, but in that year the salary plan was substituted; the salaries now ranged between about $10 and $25 weekly. A time-honored method of eking out the income was the benefit. A portion of each season was set aside for this purpose; each member of the troupe was assigned a night for which he arranged the program, and from which he received the profits. Once an actor had shown his ability to handle a part, it became in a manner his property, and it was no uncommon thing to see an elderly man playing the youthful rôle he had been given years before. Because of this permanence of casts there was much rivalry for the leading parts, and much ill-will resulted, especially between the older players and the new recruits fresh from England, who looked with lordly contempt on these Thespians of the wilderness. The actresses were frequently the

wives of the actors, and were content to be known by their husbands' names. The marital confusion which characterizes the profession to-day was then less commonly found. Some of the players were fond of making themselves conspicuous on the street by their dress. West appeared in leather breeches and a scarlet coat with a high collar, Robbins wore gold lace on his collar and three gold hat-bands, while Hodgkinson still powdered, curled, and braided his hair, and adhered to breeches and stockings instead of pantaloons and boots. "This costume, with his hat on one side, and an air and manner then known by the appellation of *theatrical,* marked him among thousands."[55]

An important member of the staff was the scene-painter. Before this period scenery had been largely neglected, a few cheap canvases, blackened with age, being used for all occasions. But in the nineties of the eighteenth century this branch of the art underwent improvement. New scenes were painted for the more prominent plays, and a vivid description of special scenery came to be one of the modes of advertising. Another indispensable personage was the attendant, who at intervals during the performance appeared on the stage to move the furniture or to snuff the candles.

The repertories consisted of plays ranging from Shakespeare to the latest contemporary. English dramas were in an overwhelming majority; the recent London successes were imported as soon as possible. American plays were accepted, but the

[55] "American Theatre," p. 102.

most popular of them could not vie with the English pieces. Following British custom, the program was composed of a comedy or tragedy, with a farce or comic opera as afterpiece. Perhaps a pantomime or song and dance would serve as interlude between the two, or an elaborate pantomime might take the place of the farce. Not infrequently the bill would close with an acrobatic feat, such as a rope-walking act or a leap through a barrel of fire.

The audiences were distributed in an interesting manner. The boxes, to which the admission was $1, were much more numerous than now, and were the resort of the ladies and the gentlemen who accompanied them. It was the practice of the box-holders to send servants several hours in advance to protect the seats from invasion. Certain boxes were reserved for the prostitutes, who did not neglect this opportunity to advertise themselves,—an evil which Dunlap greatly deplored. The pit was occupied almost entirely by unattached gentlemen, who paid 75 cents for the privilege of sitting on a bench. Above them hung the chandelier of candles, and woe betide the apparel of the man who sat directly under it! The gallery was reserved for the rabble at 50 cents a head. They were the most vociferous part of the house, and did not scruple to express their disapproval by either words or missiles. At times actors, orchestra, and audience alike suffered from their attentions.

But with all its crudity, our early theatre

achieved honorable results. The permanent classics of English dramatic literature held a much larger place than they do to-day. Shakespeare, Otway, Farquhar, Rowe, and Lillo found an abode in the play-houses of America, and actors capable of interpreting them. The companies must have been prodigiously industrious; during a year's run they would sometimes give as many as seventy different plays and about the same number of farces. And at their best these performances were finished, dignified, and artistic.

III

While the negotiations were in progress by which Dunlap became a theatrical manager, the realization was forced on him that his two prospective associates were bitter enemies. Hodgkinson had compelled Mrs. Hallam to withdraw from the stage temporarily, because of her persistent intoxication, in which state she often insulted him and disgraced herself before the audience. Hallam protested that his wife had been misrepresented, and that his partner had stolen all the principal parts for himself and his favorites; while Hodgkinson swore that he would refuse to play unless he could have the parts he desired. This strife, the result of professional jealousy, it became the new director's first duty to allay. He found the task so exasperating that he offered to sell out and retire. But in June a two-year agreement was

drawn up and signed, which reduced the machinery to some sort of running order. This contract throws so much light on Dunlap's position in the new concern that it is worth quoting in full.

ARTICLES of AGREEMENT

Between

LEWIS HALLAM, JOHN HODGKINSON,

and

WILLIAM DUNLAP.

WE, the SUBSCRIBERS, do hereby Covenant and Agree, to exert ourselves in the several Ways hereafter mentioned, for the mutual Benefit and Profit of each other, and of that Property known under the Denomination of *Property of the Old American Company;* of which the One Half belongs to *Lewis Hallam,* One Fourth to *John Hodgkinson,* and One Fourth to *William Dunlap.*

THAT *William Dunlap* shall, as Acting Manager of the Company, determine, weekly, the Business of the coming Week; that is, what Plays shall be performed; subject to no other Controul than the joint Disapprobation of the other Proprietors. That he shall *get up* what new Pieces he shall think best, and in the Manner he shall deem proper, subject only to the same Controul; and *cast* them in Conformity to his Judgment, and the Articles of the several Performers.

That *Lewis Hallam* shall exert himself as a Performer in all those Characters which he has performed, on Stock Nights, since the Commencement of the Firm of *Hallam* and *Hodgkinson*, if called upon so to do by the Acting Manager, either by Notification that the Plays containing such Characters will be performed, or otherwise: That these Characters are considered as his Property; but he shall not resign any one or more of them, without the Concurrence of the Acting Manager; and then only into his Hands, to be at his sole Disposal.

That *John Hodgkinson*, etc., as in preceding paragraph.

That, in all Engagements made with any Performers, the Acting Manager, and one of the other Proprietors, shall have Power to bind the three; and no Contract or Engagement shall be made with any Person whatever, without such Concurrence of the Acting Manager, and one of the other Proprietors.

That no other Division of the Profits of the Copartnership shall take Place, under any Appellation whatever, than such Division, or in such Proportion as now exists; and no Alteration whatever shall take Place, without the Concurrence of all the Proprietors.

That, to prevent Discord and Confusion behind the Scenes, no Person shall be admitted, except the Performers, under any Pretence whatever, without a written Permission from the Acting

Manager; Servants, &c., having Tickets for the Season.

THAT, in all Regulations for the Welfare of the Theatre, made by the Acting Manager, with the Concurrence of the other Proprietors, or such one of them as shall be present, they shall consider themselves on an Equality with the other Performers, except as more bound to a scrupulous Observance of them by the superior Influence of their Example.

THAT the following Plays, *The Revenge, Distress'd Mother, Suspicious Husband, Hamlet, Much Ado about Nothing,* and such other of the old Drama as have not been performed during the Firm of *Hallam* and *Hodgkinson,* shall be liable to the *Cast* of the Acting Manager; Mr. Hallam or Mr. Hodgkinson having no other Controul over such Cast than the Refusal to play in the Piece, if the Character allotted to either of them is such as he shall object to.

THAT, in Addition to the Business of Acting Manager, *William Dunlap* shall act as Treasurer and Bookkeeper to the Company.

THAT *John Hodgkinson* shall assist the Acting Manager by his Advice and Personal Aid; and in Case of *William Dunlap's* Sickness, or Absence from other unavoidable Causes, or for Purposes agreed upon among the Proprietors, or a Majority of them, *John Hodgkinson* shall be considered as Acting Manager, and execute the Duties of the Office in the Place of *William*

Dunlap; receiving from said *Dunlap* (in Case such Absence shall be for one or more Weeks) that Salary which he receives as Acting Manager.

THAT, in Case of any Default on the Part of either or any of the Subscribers, within the Term of two Years, from the first Day of May, 1796, they do severally bind themselves in the Penalty of Four Thousand Pounds, lawful Money of the State of New-York, to be forfeited by such Breach of this Agreement.

THAT, in Case any of the Subscribers should determine on selling the Whole, or any Part, of their Division of the above-mentioned Property, within the above-named Time, the Party so wishing to sell, shall give the Offer, or Refusal, to the other Party or Parties, at a Price to be agreed on by them, or to be determined by three indifferent Persons, chosen by the respective Parties.

LEWIS HALLAM. (L. S.)
Hugh Gaine JOHN HODGKINSON. (L. S.)
John Gamage WILLIAM DUNLAP. (L. S.) [56]

Early in July, upon the closing of the theatrical year in New York, Dunlap escorted the company to Hartford, where it shortly became apparent that the receipts could not meet the costs. After advancing $400 or $500 from his own pocket, he

[56] John Hodgkinson, "A Narrative of his Connection with the Old American Company, From the Fifth of September, 1792, To the Thirty-First of March, 1797," New York, 1797, pp. 20 ff.

withdrew to Perth Amboy to spend the summer with his family and Brown.

Late in September, 1796, John Street opened for the fall season. The company, with which the new manager was connected, included a few actors worthy of mention besides the Hallams and Hodgkinsons. Chief among these was Joseph Jefferson, who had come from England a year or two before.[57] Though still under twenty-five, he was already an artist in comedy and soon attained the first rank among American comedians. Dunlap described him as a handsome youth with a perfectly Grecian nose, blue eyes full of laughter, and a mobile face capable of exciting mirth by the power of feature alone. Another performer of note was Mrs. Melmoth. She had gone through a respectable career at Covent Garden and Drury Lane, but when her figure grew too matronly and her reputation too time-worn, she came to America in 1793, and engaged for New York, where she became a favorite in tragedy. Mr. and Mrs. John Johnson were also actors of considerable experience in England, Johnson having played for five years at the Haymarket. They became valuable acquisitions of the New York company early in 1796. Mrs. Johnson, who was tall, beautiful, and elegant of manner, played the fine ladies of comedy more perfectly than any one had yet done in this country. It was a highly specialized company; each performer had his particular forte,

[57] Joseph Jefferson of *Rip Van Winkle* fame was his grandson.

and the parts were distributed accordingly. Thus one actor made a specialty of comic old men, another of serious fathers, a third of romantic heroes; one actress was excellent in old women, another in young girls, etc. It was, as a whole, a company of no little versatility and merit.

On the last day of October a new drama from Dunlap's pen, "The Mysterious Monk," was performed with Hodgkinson in the leading part. Its reception was not enthusiastic.[58] Quiet now seems to have prevailed in the greenroom, but the theatre was not to be the abode of tranquillity. One night in November two sea captains became drunk (it was then permissible to bring liquor into the house), and began calling for "Yankee Doodle" during the overture. Not receiving the desired solace for their patriotic ears, they hurled missiles at the orchestra and defied the indignant audience. A riot ensued, which resulted in the ejection of the offenders; but returning later with a number of sailors, they assailed the doors of the play-house until the city watch took them into custody. This fracas resulted in the prohibition of intoxicants until the end of the first piece.[59]

Perhaps it was about this time that Dunlap came to grief through a practical joke. Dr. Pierre Michaux, a French refugee in New York, had published a tract on surgery. Dr. Wright Post, a surgeon of the city, induced his friend Dunlap

[58] It was repeated in November, 1796, and again in January, 1803.

[59] Seilhamer, Vol. III, p. 381.

to write a caricature of the work and the author. At John Street a ludicrous afterpiece was gotten up, called "Fractura Minimi Digiti," in which Michaux was excellently taken off. The next Sunday, as the dramatist was leaving the Brick Church, the irate Frenchman set upon him, and gave him such a drubbing as to suspend his church attendance for some weeks.[60]

On the 9th of January, 1797, Dunlap initiated a new phase of his work by presenting a partial translation from the French, "Tell Truth and Shame the Devil." This two-act sketch was repeated once or twice, and two years later it had the honor of appearing, somewhat reduced, at Covent Garden. An English critic pronounced it a "trifling performance, which might have been confined to the other side of the Atlantic without any loss."[61]

The Hallam-Hodgkinson feud continuing to the distress of the new partner, he relinquished his salary and retreated for a time. During his temporary absence from the field of conflict, an extraordinary episode occurred. The Hallams, having resolved to reinstate Mrs. Hallam, had secretly scattered their supporters through the house, and when Hodgkinson came on he was stupefied by a chorus of hisses. Mrs. Hallam then entered, dressed in black and looking "beauty

[60] J. W. Francis, "Old New York," New York, 1866, pp. 66–7.

[61] "European Magazine and London Review," Vol. XXXV, p. 330.

in distress." Loud plaudits greeted her, while clubs were brandished at the speechless Hodgkinson. At this point Hallam, also dressed in black, stalked in, and requested that his wife be given a hearing. Whereupon she read a statement of her grievances and retired. Both men now tried to address the audience, but Hodgkinson succeeded in gaining its ear. After silencing Hallam and quelling the rioters, he continued the play amid constant applause. But the next night he was hissed off the stage, and in his wrath he refused to have anything more to do with the theatre. Suit was begun against Hallam for disturbing the peace, and that clever actor, to gain sympathy, insisted on going to jail in spite of the sheriff's efforts to prevent him. He soon wearied of this and liberated himself, but his point had been won and Mrs. Hallam was free to return to the stage. Hodgkinson having thrown up the command, Dunlap was compelled to resume his position.

Early in May he obtained a brief respite from his trials by going to Philadelphia as a deputy to the Abolition Convention. Smith and Mitchill accompanied him, and a happy reunion with Brown took place. As chairman of a committee, the dramatist drew up a memorial, which produced from Congress an act against the slave-trade. Sometime later a slave-ship was condemned through testimony of his procuring. Dunlap's attitude toward slavery was broad-minded and sane. While deprecating the evil, he realized that out-and-out abolition might do more harm than

good by working injustice both to the slaveholder, who sometimes was innocently such, and to the slave, who might be more miserable free than bound. Colonization appealed to him as the most satisfactory solution.[62]

On June 7, 1797, perhaps as a sort of peace offering to Hodgkinson, Dunlap staged "The Man of Fortitude," a joint product of the two men. It was, however, a case of involuntary collaboration, since Hodgkinson had appropriated the other's manuscript and rewritten it to suit himself.[63]

On the 16th of June the new manager's first season closed. His previous life of peaceful leisure had given place to one of much activity, responsibility, and turbulence. He had suddenly been plunged into a world of discord and petty strife which tried his spirit sorely. The compensation seems already to have been inadequate to his investment of time and money, for during the summer we find him trying to borrow a few hundred dollars to reopen in the fall.[64] Dunlap's influence on the productions of this year has been described by Seilhamer, his constant and unreasoning detractor, as "grotesque."[65] Such attacks are scarcely worthy of notice, yet it should be pointed out that far from suffering, our stage benefited from this year of his directing. The old pieces were much the same as those of the previous

[62] "American Theatre," p. 170.

[63] It was repeated in 1798, and given twice in 1806. It was acted at Albany in 1824–5.

[64] Dunlap's Diary, Vol. XIV, p. 49.

[65] Seilhamer, Vol. III, p. 387.

season, which Seilhamer characterized as the most brilliant ever known at John Street; and among the new ones were five American plays, representing four different writers, as against one the previous year. Such encouragement of native drama hardly deserves condemnation.

Before the closing of the theatre, important changes had been decided on for the fall. A group of business men were constructing a new playhouse in Park Row. Dunlap and Hodgkinson were invited to become joint lessees of the building, and in May they agreed to occupy it for the four ensuing seasons. The two managers arranged between themselves that Hodgkinson should receive $55 a week as actor and stage superintendent, and Dunlap $24 as treasurer and joint director. They agreed with Hallam to purchase his theatrical property, to give him one fourth of the profits, and to retain him and his wife as actors.

The first two accessible volumes of Dunlap's manuscript Diary extend from July 27, 1797, to June 1, 1798. If my account of this period is disproportionately full, it is because I have the material to give a more intimate picture of the man than heretofore. The last of July found him and his family spending the summer with his mother at Perth Amboy. In these pages occur numerous references to his children, John and Margaret. To their education he devoted much care, and was rewarded by a certain precocity in John, who read "Alexander's Feast" to his father, perused Shakespeare's historical plays eagerly, and

for pastime sailed round the world on a map, visiting the places Cook had introduced him to. But the boy sometimes found less intellectual amusements, as this pleasant glimpse shows:

"Aug. 7. After breakfast I walked off for Woodbridge, the two Children by agreement go with me as far as the Barracks to carry my little bundle; I took them nearly to the parting roads, kiss'd them and sent them back hand in hand, after walking some way I looked back thro' my glass and saw that Margaret had submitted that John should drive her as his horse with a rush whip & they both were galloping into town."[66]

Dunlap's employments were gardening, nature study, and reading, often with his wife. He seems to have read everything available, including the encyclopedia, through which he waded alphabetically, passing from Platonism to potatoes without a qualm. A specimen day from the Diary will throw much light on his habits:

"July 28. Before day we had a violent gust of wind rain & lightning. I was up before 5 & worked in the garden some hours. Read Hume with John & teach Margaret. Write to Holcroft. I had an opportunity of observing that the young blue bird is considerably like the young Robin. I saw yesterday, in a boy's hands, a young flying squirrel, I took him & examined his peculiarty. Afternoon walk a little way with my

[66] Diary, Vol. XIV, pp. 24–5.

gun: shot a rabbit. The male Bobolink has disappear'd. Return to tea at Mrs Terrills. Read Condorcet. We have a fine rain."[67]

Even to this quiet retreat Dunlap's troubles pursued him. At the close of the last theatrical season Hodgkinson assumed his duties as part manager of the new concern by taking the company north for the summer. After a few nights of loss at Hartford, he moved on to Boston. The Hartford proprietors being dissatisfied, he engaged another company under the direction of one Solee, to finish out the season there. At Boston Hodgkinson lost money regularly. Thus Dunlap was called upon to support two companies that could not meet expenses. He was opposed to the summer touring plan; he felt that the better measure was to do little or nothing in the summer and to open early in the fall, but his partner's ideas were of a more expansive sort and won his reluctant acquiescence. On August 16 he wrote to Boston, strongly reaffirming his disapproval and advising concentration on New York. He concluded with this kindly sentence: "I feel for you Hodgkinson—I began this letter last night but was too much distress'd to go on . . . read this more than once & take no offence at it, our interest is one."[68]

The very thing which Dunlap's early fall opening plan was intended to prevent took place. In August Wignell and Reinagle from Philadelphia

[67] Diary, Vol. XIV, p. 2.
[68] *Ibid.*, Vol. XIV, pp. 34–5.

established themselves at New York for a few weeks. In opposition to the invaders, Hodgkinson sent Solee to hold forth at John Street,—another losing venture, for the town could not support two houses. On the 8th of September Dunlap returned with his family to the city, and immediately busied himself trying to borrow money. Some months before, he had purchased a small farm near Amboy; on this security he tried to raise $900 or $1000, but somehow money was not forthcoming. He wrote Hodgkinson: "I am running about town to borrow, subject to mortifications which almost weary me of life." Another trial was ill-health. Then in October that most dreaded of pestilences, yellow fever, struck New York; the business of the store fell off in consequence, the apprentice died of the fever in Dunlap's own house, and Judah, his mercantile partner, became ill. But in the midst of these troubles he was able to spend social evenings with the Woolseys, to converse with Mitchill on chemistry and agriculture, to induct John into the mysteries of the multiplication-table, and to commence a novel. His buoy was confidence in the new theatre. He wrote optimistically to Hodgkinson: "I believe three years of your spirited direction, with strict attention to your interest as a manager and less solicitude for your reputation as an actor, will put you above the necessity of being either manager or actor." In this hope he permitted his partner to continue the losing business in Boston in order to keep the company together for the new house.

One begins to suspect that Dunlap was not a cautious business man. Further proof is the fact that he went to Perth Amboy the first of November, and agreed to purchase a small piece of land adjoining his farm for $350.[69]

The novel which Dunlap began writing at this time, with the title of "The Anti-Jacobin," never got beyond a few pages in his Diary, yet the fragment possesses distinct interest. It shows considerable ability at narrative and portraiture, but it is chiefly important for the light it throws on its author's philosophy. The hero's prospective father-in-law repudiates him almost at the altar because he has become a radical thinker,—a Jacobin. The leading figure is a narrow and bigoted clergyman who hates anything savoring of intellectual independence. "Enquiry," he says, "is an enemy to faith, & without faith there is no salvation." This polemical fragment was doubtless inspired by the inspirer of so much radicalism about 1800—William Godwin. Brown was a disciple of the philosopher, and through him Dunlap probably became acquainted with the tenets of the school. That he read "The Inquirer" in the summer of 1797, we learn from his Diary, and he must have been familiar with "Political Justice" as well. His acceptance of Godwinism showed itself elsewhere than in "The Anti-Jacobin." Writing to Holcroft concerning slavery, he propounded this Godwinian aphorism: "That which is good, is only so, be-

[69] For this paragraph see Diary, Vol. XIV, pp. 51, 59–96, 100; Vol. XV, p. 122.

cause it produces happiness." In two magazine articles written during the autumn, he expressed Godwinian opinions on justice and virtue. And finally, he seems at this time to have leaned toward religious skepticism, if we may judge from an entry in his Diary: "Mrs. Woolsey ye younger made some indirect attacks on my infidelity"; and from his contempt for Timothy Dwight's sermons on infidel philosophy, which he considered an "intemperate farrago of falsehood and abuse."[70]

To return to affairs theatrical: Hodgkinson having left Boston, Dunlap set out for that city on the 17th of November to square up finances. The journey was eventful. Snow and rain fell constantly, the Connecticut River was crossed amid ice, and at Shrewsbury the stage-coach lost a rear wheel, in which accident the chivalrous Dunlap "had the felicity of supporting miss polly pease, the landlord's daughter." At Boston he found no other course open but to sign more notes. Incidentally he hobnobbed with the Federalists, associated with Josiah Quincy and Jedidiah Morse, read Voltaire, and worked on a play called "André" which he had begun some years before. He returned from this futile journey in the middle of December.[71]

The new theatre had been promised for October, but it was yet far from ready. The managers had no alternative but to open at John Street in order

[70] Diary, Vol. XIV, pp. 6, 71; Vol. XV, p. 133; see *post*, pp. 272–3.
[71] *Ibid.*, Vol. XIV, pp. 105–141; Vol. XV, p. 1.

to make at least a part of the salaries of the company, which had been augmented in anticipation of the larger house. Delay was not the only irritation. The partners had failed to obtain the signatures of the building committee to their agreement; the proprietors, taking advantage of this oversight, reduced the term of the lease at the agreed rate from three and a half years to one, and demanded free tickets to every performance for all the stockholders. The partners indignantly resented these impositions, and in the final contract a compromise was made by which the rent was slightly reduced in exchange for 113 free tickets nightly.[72] But the length of the lease remained uncertain.

At John Street, Dunlap and Hodgkinson were losing consistently. As a last resource, on January 29, 1798, they moved into the new theatre, though it was still unfinished. The program consisted of an address written by E. H. Smith, a curtain-raiser called "All in a Bustle; or, The New House," by Milne, "As You Like It," and a farce, "The Purse; or, American Tar." The great event was advertised at length in the newspapers several

[72] Diary, Vol. XV, pp. 16 ff. The rent was proportioned to the nightly receipts as follows:

7½ per cent. on a $500 to $600 house.
12½ per cent. on a 600 to 700 house.
15 per cent. on a 700 to 800 house.
17½ per cent. on a 800 to 1200 house.
20 per cent. on a 1200 up house.
10 per cent. on benefit nights.

days in advance with such instructions to patrons as these:

"Ladies and gentlemen are requested to be particular in sending servants early to keep boxes."

"The offensive practice to Ladies, and dangerous one to the house, of smoking segars, during the performance, it is hoped, every gentleman will consent to an absolute prohibition of."

"Ladies and Gentlemen will please to direct their servants to *set down* with their horses heads towards the New Brick Meeting, and *take up* with their heads towards *Broad Way.*"

"The doors will be opened at 5, and the curtain drawn up at a quarter past 6 o'clock."[73]

On the opening night the crowd was so large that many pushed in without tickets. The receipts were $1232. Everybody was delighted with the new house, which was much larger and better arranged than the old one, and especially with the scenery, which was said to surpass anything ever seen in America.[74] Dunlap was wonderfully set up over the success. At last his hopes were about to be realized, his dream of a popular theatre with the productions under his control was about to come true. In his exuberance he sent $100 to Perth Amboy in part payment for the new land, which before he was on the point of relinquishing; and subscribed $20 to a fund for the relief of an

[73] "Commercial Advertiser," January 26 and following issues.

[74] "American Theatre," p. 221, states that by this time over $127,000 had been spent on the building, and only about $42,000 paid in by subscribers. Dunlap considered it a monument of waste and mismanagement.

embarrassed actor. But the next playing night brought in only $513, the third $265, and Dunlap was again in the depths. Indeed by February 7 business was so bad that he seriously considered closing the establishment.[75]

At the end of February, however, there was reason for a little more optimism because of the enthusiastic reception accorded to Cooper, a recently engaged actor. Thomas Abthorpe Cooper was an Englishman, twenty-two years old, who had been reared by Godwin. In 1796 he was playing in the provinces with distinction, when Wignell arrived and hired him for Philadelphia. He performed in New York in August, 1797, with the Philadelphia Company, and was preferred to all other tragedians ever seen in the city. When he broke with Wignell and Reinagle a few months later, he found a ready opening at New York. On the 28th of February Cooper made his bow as *Hamlet* before a house of $895. In a few days "King John" was given; it seems to have been an unusually artistic performance, for the warmest praise was bestowed not only on Cooper's acting, but also on the general conduct of the stage, as well as on the costumes and scenery.[76]

It was soon discovered that Cooper was not a harbinger of permanent good fortune. The receipts began falling below expenses. One night

[75] Diary, Vol. XV, pp. 39, 45; "American Theatre," p. 218.

[76] "Commercial Advertiser," March 5. That Dunlap, in producing plays, strove for settings that were both attractive and historically accurate, we learn from his Diary, in which he spoke of his researches for this purpose.

the house contained $99. But when Dunlap's "André" was brought out on March 30 to an $800 audience, a temporary relief was experienced. This play had received the author's most careful labor; he had revised and polished it for months, he had staged it with new costumes and scenery, and he expected some comfortable returns. But two accidents occurred the first night which helped consign the play to an early demise. In the first place, Cooper, who was developing careless habits of study, had imperfectly memorized his part. In a scene—the most pathetic of the tragedy—between him and Hodgkinson, his memory failed, and the actor, "after repeating, 'Oh, André!—oh, André!' . . . approached the unfortunate André, who in vain waited for *his* cue, and falling in a burst of sorrow on his neck, cried, loud enough to he heard at the side scene, 'Oh, André!—damn the prompter!—Oh, André! What's next, Hodgkinson,' and sunk in unutterable sorrow on the breast of his overwhelmed friend." In the second place, when the American champion of André tore the cockade from his hat in his wrath at the spy's sentence, there was a protest from the audience. Dunlap altered the objectionable part, but on the second night the play was given to a house of only $271, and the third and last night for the author's benefit to $329.[77]

[77] "American Theatre," p. 223; Diary, Vol. XV, pp. 76, 78, 82. The prison scene from the last act of "André" was included in the matinée of American plays given on January 22 and 23, 1917, at the Republic Theatre by the New York Center of the Drama League of America.

In the spring of 1798 the proprietors of the New Theatre saw fit to end the existing lease and to require a rent of $5000 for the ensuing year. Hodgkinson found this a convenient opportunity to withdraw from the concern in order to assume the managership at Boston, and Hallam, to whom an offer of whole or part ownership was made, preferred to continue as a salaried actor.[78] In consequence, on the 27th of April, William Dunlap signed articles by which he became sole director and manager of the New York theatre.

The season closed on June 29, and Dunlap retired to Perth Amboy. He had reëngaged nearly all his old company, and with the theatre decorated and improved, and a new stock of scenery, he planned to open early in September to catch the summer visitors. But his hopes were not to be realized. Before the vacation was over, the city was again stricken by yellow fever. This time it broke into the circle of Dunlap's dearest friends. Elihu Hubbard Smith, while attending the sick, was seized with the malady, and died on the 20th of September in the presence of Brown and Johnson. Brown himself was ailing, and with Johnson he repaired to the healthier atmosphere of Amboy. Here the three friends spent several weeks together. Brown wrote to his brother: "This calamity has endeared the survivors of the sacred fellowship,

[78] The Hallams continued as actors in the New York company until after Dunlap's retirement in 1805.

W. D., W. J., and myself to each other in a very high degree."[79]

While New York was still in mourning, the theatre was opened on December 3 with the "School for Scandal." For this event the manager had decorated the house at his own expense, and had thus brought it to a passable state of completeness. The New, or Park, Theatre stood on lots 21, 23, 25 Park Row, about two hundred feet north of Ann Street. It was a very plain, three-story stone building, with a frontage of eighty feet and a depth of one hundred and sixty-five. Half a dozen steps led up to the entrance. It was the original intention to add a porch with a colonnade, but it never materialized. Within, you passed the box-office on your right and entered a wide lobby, which admitted you to the auditorium. The stage was large in comparison with others then known, and bowed well out into the orchestra. The pit was considered remarkably commodious. The boxes, which were named after noted dramatists, were arranged around the pit in three semi-circles. The lower circle contained sixteen boxes, and the second twelve; in this circle, the center box, which bore the name of Shakespeare, was large enough to seat two or three hundred. In the third row the boxes extended only along the side of the semi-circle, the middle being taken up by a gallery. There were in addition four or five private proscenium boxes. Cushioned benches rather than separate chairs were used, except in

[79] Dunlap, "Life of Brown," Vol. II, p. 10.

the gallery, where the cushions were no doubt omitted. The total capacity was probably in the neighborhood of sixteen hundred. A much praised feature was the absence of all supporting pillars, which gave every one a clear view of the stage. The richness of the decorations was said to surpass anything in America. The dome, which corresponded in area to the pit, was azure, with clouds and celestial forms, and carried in front a medallion of Washington, sustained by an eagle. Over the stage and each range of boxes hung a canopy of green and gold. The curtain of blue mohair, fringed in gold, contained in the center a lyre and the motto: "To hold the Mirror up to Nature." At various points about the room there were engaged columns of the Corinthian order, and numerous plaster figures. Elaborate chandeliers, totaling seventy-six lights, illuminated the house with the glow of candles.[80]

The company consisted of about twenty actors, an orchestra of fourteen, and a dozen or more helpers, including a scene-painter and a prompter. The weekly expenses of the institution were $1161 without counting any remuneration for the manager's services,—and the first week's receipts were $997.

The second week saw Dunlap's most important innovation. On December 10 he staged his version of Kotzebue's "Stranger" with Cooper in the

[80] "Commercial Advertiser," January 31 and December 4, 1798; T. A. Brown, Vol. I, pp. 11–12; "American Theatre," p. 344.

title-rôle. Happily for the director, this play took the town. It was given at least twelve times during the season and proved the support of the theatre.[81] Its success determined the adapter to exploit its author further, and for this purpose he set about improving his rather meagre German.

In January, 1799, Dunlap presented an opera he had written, called "Sterne's Maria; or, The Vintage," with music by Pelisier, a member of the orchestra. Cooper and Jefferson were among the performers. The opera was elaborately gotten up, and met with enough encouragement to warrant four or five repetitions. Early in February "The Natural Daughter," a comedy by the same author, was brought out. It was "complicated and ineffective, and was most wretchedly played in a cold winter's storm, to empty benches, and never repeated."[82] But the writer was now well started on a play-writing orgy, and the product came thick and fast. On Washington's Birthday he contributed "The Temple of Independence," a musical afterpiece.[83] His second adaptation from Kotzebue, "Lovers' Vows," appeared on the 11th of March, with Cooper in the leading part. It was as well received as its predecessor, being given eight or ten times during the remainder of the season, and retaining a place in the New York repertories for at least forty years. Next came Kotzebue's "Count Benyowski" on April 1,—

[81] It was repeated frequently for many years.
[82] "American Theatre," p. 260.
[83] Repeated on July 4.

highly lauded for its beautiful Russian scenery and costumes. But the play did not prove lastingly popular.[84] Two weeks later "The Italian Father" made its appearance on the boards. It was in reality the work of Dunlap, but was thought to be another translation from Kotzebue, and was praised accordingly. The author, fearing the prejudice against American literature, did not dispel the illusion. Perhaps the secret leaked out; at any rate, the drama had an unsensational career.[85] Early in May the manager attempted another German dramatist, Schiller, but New York did not find "Don Carlos" to its liking, and it was not repeated. "Indians in England," another Kotzebue-Dunlap play, was given a single performance on June 14. On the 4th of July the "apparently indefatigable manager," as he called himself, closed the season with "The School for Soldiers," which he had altered from the French.[86]

The year had been an intensely busy one for Dunlap. Aside from managing the finances, supervising the productions, and attending to the multitude of details involved in running a large theatre, he had written or adapted ten new pieces and presented them before the public. It had

[84] Given about seven times at New York the first two or three years, and revived for two performances in 1814. Given at Boston in 1799–1800.

[85] Given three times this season, performed at Boston in the fall, and revived at New York for a single night in 1802.

[86] Repeated four or five times on national holidays during the next few years.

been an important year for the American stage because of the number and popularity of the German plays. Hitherto our theatre had been dominated by British drama, but a powerful rival was now in the field. In many ways it was the most comfortable season Dunlap had ever gone through. Peace prevailed in the greenroom; there was no headstrong partner to turn his plans upside down; and financially, thanks to Kotzebue, he was able to make both ends meet, though he seems to have realized little or no profit. For the next year he secured the theatre at a rent of $4000. But he had made an arrangement which was to result in further annoyance and distress. Hodgkinson's Boston enterprise having proved unsatisfactory, he had offered to return to New York, and Dunlap, whether from pity, hope of profit, or fatal fascination, agreed to accept both him and his wife at a joint salary of $100 a week.

As usual, Dunlap summered in Perth Amboy, where he employed himself in translating further plays of the favorite German dramatist. Because of another visitation of yellow fever, the theatre did not open in the autumn until November 18. Three weeks later "False Shame," a new translation from Kotzebue, was presented. Though devoid of scenery, this production gained great popularity through the splendid acting of Hodgkinson and Miss Ellen Westray. It proved the support of the house this year, but was seldom seen thereafter.

On the 14th of December, 1799, occurred the

death of Washington. The news reaching New York on the 20th, the theatre was closed for ten days. It reopened on the 30th for a kind of memorial program. The auditorium was draped in black. As an overture the band played "Washington's March"; then a monody, written by C. B. Brown, was spoken by Cooper, who unfortunately had to be prompted throughout. A new play, "The Robbery," translated from the French by Dunlap, and a comic opera as afterpiece, rather inappropriately ended the program. The play was poorly given, chiefly because of Cooper's lapses of memory, and was repeated but once. Meanwhile greenroom difficulties were developing. Cooper, feeling himself unjustly treated by the manager and thrown into the shade by Hodgkinson, broke his connection with the company at the end of the year. This was a severe blow to the Park, but the vogue of Hodgkinson in German drama was a partial offset.

Dunlap continued to dig for treasure in the Teutonic mine. Late in January, 1800, he produced "The Wild Goose Chace," altered into an opera from Kotzebue's farce. The play itself had merit, and Hodgkinson's acting made it a success.[87] In March the translator began publishing his German plays in a series called "The German Theatre." The first of this series, which did not go beyond the third number, was "The

[87] Given at Philadelphia this season. The next winter reduced to two acts, and as an afterpiece occasionally seen for three or four years.

Wild Goose Chace." It was printed in pamphlet form with portraits of Kotzebue and Hodgkinson; it included a brief autobiography of the author, and a few notes marking the variations from the original.

The opera was followed within two weeks by "The Force of Calumny," which was a moderate success. On the 12th of March appeared "The Virgin of the Sun," one of the longest-lived of Kotzebue's plays on the American stage. It was given five or six times this season with considerable spectacle, and periodically revived during the first half of the nineteenth century. As the second number of "The German Theatre" it was printed in 1800.

"Pizarro," sequel to "The Virgin of the Sun," came close on the heels of its precursor. Its première occurred on March 26; it was repeated at least six times during the spring, and published as the third number of "The German Theatre." Of all Kotzebue's plays acted in New York, it was far and away the most permanently popular. During the forty years that I have investigated, it was given approximately two hundred times, while its nearest competitor, "The Stranger," was given only half as often.[88]

The last adaptation from the German this season was "The Stranger's Birthday," a two-act comedy

[88] The British translations of a number of these plays seem to have been used in New York after a few years; so the figures do not necessarily include Dunlap's translations alone.

which appeared and disappeared on the manager's benefit night. The theatrical year closed on July 4, 1800. Dunlap had been only less productive this season than the last, having translated at least seven plays, six of them by Kotzebue. The year must have been a fairly encouraging one financially. To an outsider the theatre seemed harmonious and peaceful, "but all within was discord and discontent."[89]

Throughout this season there had been much activity on the part of the newspaper critics, a tribe which began asserting itself in 1796. Previous to that date newspaper comment had been almost entirely eulogistic, but from then on, the critics assumed the right of condemning whatever they chose. In 1799–1800 they had little else than praise for the German dramas, but the actors were ruthlessly handled, and the staging was sometimes ridiculed. The players retaliated, threatened personal violence, and tried to muzzle their antagonists, which only spurred them on to new attacks.

The season of 1800–1 began somewhat earlier than usual on the 20th of October. Four days later, to the delight of theatre-goers, another comedy by Kotzebue was most admirably played with Hodgkinson and Jefferson in the leading parts. "Fraternal Discord" proved to be one of Dunlap's most enduring translations. It outlived the six or seven repetitions of its first year, and continued to reappear for almost half a century.

[89] "American Theatre," p. 276.

To vary the monotony of German adaptation, the dramatist produced an opera, "The Knight of Guadalquiver," with music by Hewit, the orchestra leader. After two poorly attended performances in December, it was withdrawn and forgotten.

The manager's troubles were again multiplying. Receipts had for some weeks fallen below expenses, and Hodgkinson, unrestrained by the rivalry of Cooper, was demanding everything, from a wardrobe appropriation to an equal share in the directing. Dunlap feared to alienate him and granted all except the last demand, but hostility resulted none the less. Dunlap no doubt became irritable, and Hodgkinson magnified every cause for offense. Quarrels were inevitable; the actor threatened blows, and the manager was accused of carrying pistols.

In the midst of such difficulties, Dunlap placed one of his most popular translations on the stage. On the 11th of February, 1801, "Abaellino, the Great Bandit," adapted from the German of Zschokke, began a long career. It was given at least nine times this spring, and for a quarter of a century it was one of the New York stand-bys. Nor was it confined to New York. It was soon to be seen at Philadelphia, Boston, Albany, Charleston, and indeed at almost every theatre in the United States.

By way of commemorating Washington's Birthday, Dunlap's patriotism again took dramatic form. As an afterpiece to "The School for Soldiers" he brought out "The Soldier of '76,"

which seems to have been shelved immediately. A drama from the French, "Abbé de l'Épée," was acted in March, and repeated five or six times to the general satisfaction.

The receipts this year having fallen below those of the last two years, the manager resolved on a summer campaign. For this purpose he engaged Cooper and Mrs. Merry, both of Philadelphia. Mrs. Merry, the wife of Robert Merry the Della Cruscan, had come to this country in 1796, and had gained the reputation of being the most accomplished actress in America. The theatre was kept open during July, but partly because of Mrs. Merry's illness the financial situation was not improved.

With the welcome addition of Cooper, the Park resumed activities on November 16, 1801, but at the start the business was a losing one. The German mine was beginning to run out, and striking novelties were not easily obtained. In December a farce, "Where Is He?" translated by Dunlap from the German, was put on; and in February, 1802, appeared another afterpiece, "The Merry Gardener," a comic opera from the French. On July 5 came an original play, "The Retrospect; or, The American Revolution."[90] During this season the manager seems to have grown careless in the conduct of the stage business, a defect on which

[90] "Where Is He?" was acted four times this year and twice in 1810. "The Merry Gardener" was given three times this season. "The Retrospect" seems not to have been repeated.

the critics frequently commented. The battles were spiritless and silent, the grouping was awkward, and at times the actors behind the scenes failed to appear until summoned by those on the stage. On the whole, the year was not particularly creditable either in the manner of performing the old plays or in the quality of the new ones.

Dunlap's offerings in 1802–3 were of a more dignified character. The first was "Peter the Great; or, The Russian Mother," from the German; it was given twice in November with small success in spite of the acting of Cooper and Hodgkinson.[91] "Liberal Opinions," an original sketch, did not survive its first appearance in January. "The Voice of Nature," translated from the French, was introduced in February and became a favorite stock-piece. This was shortly succeeded by "The Good Neighbor," a brief interlude from Iffland; and this by the last of the Kotzebue translations, "The Blind Boy," which was almost a failure.[92] The final piece of the season was "The Glory of Columbia—Her Yeomanry!" a patriotic medley elaborately staged on the 4th of July before a $1287 audience. The battle scene was particularly spectacular, judging from the newspaper advertisement:

A VIEW OF YORKTOWN

With the British lines, and the lines of the besiegers. Nearer the audience are the advanced

[91] Revived for two performances in 1815.

[92] Each of the last three plays was given about four times this season.

battalions of the besieged. Cannonading commences from the Americans upon the town, which is returned. Shells thrown into the town. Explosion of a powder magazine. The French troops advance towards the most distant of the advanced batteries; the battalion begins to cannonade, but is carried at the bayonets point. (*This is done by artificial figures in perspective.*) While this is yet doing, the nearest battalion begins to cannonade, and the American Infantry rushing to the charge, they attack and carry it with fixed bayonets. (*This is done by boys completely equip'd and of a size to correspond in perspective with the machinery and the scenery.*) The British are seen asking quarter, which is given.[93]

For many years the play was employed on national holidays at New York and elsewhere, and always drew crowded houses.

The continuance of defective stage business called forth a rebuke that has become literature. In the fall of 1802 Washington Irving began his "Letters of Jonathan Oldstyle, Gent.," criticizing the theatre with Addisonian humor and whimsicality. These letters throw considerable light on theatrical conditions. Among the actors, Hodgkinson was the chief subject of ridicule. His rotundity and his rant, breast-slapping, and general showy manner were frequently burlesqued. The lifeless conduct and stiff grouping of the supers were berated, as well as the incongruous mixture of costumes to be seen in one play. It was as-

[93] "New York Evening Post," July 3, 1803.

serted that "while one actor is strutting about the stage in the cuirass and helmet of Alexander, another, dressed up in a gold-laced coat and bag-wig, with a *chapeau de bras* under his arm, is taking snuff in a fashion of one or two centuries back, and perhaps a third figures in Suwarrow boots, in the true style of modern buckism." The orchestra was reprimanded for constant repetition of the tunes it had used for years. The audience also came in for its share of attention. The occupants of the boxes, ignoring the performance, talked continually, according to Jonathan, and contrived to display themselves as much as possible. The gallery gods, who were watched over by a constable, compensated for the lack of music by their Noah's-ark tumult, and used their surplus gingerbread and apples as missiles. Irving's attacks greatly angered the actors, but the manager seems to have taken them in good part, for he published portions of them in his stage history.

Soon after assuming the reins of government Dunlap had discovered that the audiences were not sufficiently cultivated to dispense with diversions of a physical kind, and, much as he deplored the custom, he was compelled frequently to introduce acrobatics and other spectacles. For instance, in 1798 an evening was concluded by a leap through the throat of a fiery dragon. In 1799 a pantomime on the career of *Don Juan* ended with that hero's precipitation into the inferno amid a tremendous shower of fire. Late in 1802 a marvelous person

was advertised to stand on his head and revolve from sixty to a hundred times a minute, an act aptly styled "The Antipodean Whirligig." A few months later one Signor Manfredi charmed the audience by performing on the tight-rope as a prelude to "Romeo and Juliet."

The theatre had been fairly prosperous in the early part of this season, but in January, 1803, Cooper left to accept an offer in England, and the profits commenced to decline. In February the house was closed for two weeks because every performance meant additional loss.[94] In order to wind up the year's business, the manager was under the necessity of mortgaging his farm. Pursuing a retrenchment policy, he intimated to Hodgkinson that some reduction of salary might be necessary. Thereupon the actor for the last time broke his connection with the New York theatre. In 1805 he fell a victim to yellow fever.

Dunlap, who was capable of considerable vindictiveness toward his foes, has represented Hodgkinson as the villain in the tragedy of his managerial downfall. While paying tribute to the player's histrionic ability, he never omitted an opportunity to dwell upon the annoyances and losses he suffered through this associate. Undoubtedly Hodgkinson's ambition, petty jealousy, and financial unreliability were a great trial to the director, yet his hold on the public was not a little responsible for such box-office receipts as there were, and was instrumental in postponing

[94] "New York Evening Post," February 5, 1803.

Dunlap's day of reckoning. John Hodgkinson was without question the most useful and capable actor on our early stage. Not only was he excellent in comic, tragic, and singing parts, but he was one of the most efficient of stage supervisors (a capacity in which he served Dunlap) because of his thorough knowledge of the theatre and his ability to direct by example. But certain grave defects incurred Dunlap's hostility, and the friction was unceasing.

With reduced ranks the Park reopened its doors on November 14, 1803. To supplant Hodgkinson, John E. Harwood of the Philadelphia company was engaged as stage director and actor. As a comedian he ranked so high that Dunlap compared him to John Bannister; his *Falstaff* was the best yet seen in this country. The manager's contributions this year were four: a farce, "Bonaparte in England;" two comedies, "The Proverb; or, Conceit Can Cure, Conceit Can Kill," and "Lewis of Monte Blanco; or, The Transplanted Irishman" (written for Harwood, who was especially good as a Hibernian); and a French translation, "The Wife of Two Husbands."[95]

Considerable attention was paid this season to scenic display. Commenting on "Lewis of Monte Blanco," the "Evening Post" of March 13, 1804, said: "The explosion scene has a very grand effect and reflects credit on the Theatre." On another

[95] The farce was given six times this season, revived in 1809 and again in 1833; the first comedy was given twice, the second seven times; the translation was acted five times in rapid succession and occasionally revived as late as 1821.

occasion a mill with a running stream and a burning house lent interest to the evening's program.[96] But Dunlap's efforts were unrequited. The receipts seldom equaled the expenses, and in February the house was closed again for two weeks. The director, however, was not the only one to whom the Park proved a burden. The building was heavily mortgaged, and though the total investment amounted to $193,000 and more, the proprietors offered it to the lessee for $85,000. He named $40,000 as his highest price. It was put up at auction and sold for $43,000. Money was borrowed to complete the structure, but completed it never was.

On October 22, 1804, Dunlap's last, fatal season began.[97] The only bright spot was a visit from Cooper, who acted fourteen nights in November to paying houses. This flicker of prosperity precipitated a flood of bills, and the manager saw the end approaching. On January 1, 1805, he wrote: "Oppressed with disease and debt, I commence another year of my life with sentiments of gloom and self-disapprobation."[98] The theatre was finally closed on the 22d of February, and the man who for nine years had labored so unceasingly to maintain the institution declared himself insolvent. He forfeited his property of every kind. For-

[96] "New York Evening Post," January 26, 1804.

[97] The sole product of Dunlap's pen this season was "Nina," an opera from the French, given once in December and twice in February, with the original Parisian music.

[98] Quoted from the Diary in the "American Theatre," p. 326.

tunately his mother's home in Perth Amboy was immune, and thither he repaired with his family.

A survey of Dunlap's theatrical career reveals the fact that bankruptcy was impending almost from the beginning. Though he entered on the undertaking at a favorable point in our dramatic history, yet the odds soon arrayed against him were more than he could surmount. Yellow fever was one of his most persistent foes. Another was his own poor health; hardly a year passed in which he did not suffer an illness. He was not happy in his business associates; the owners of the house as well as his partners proved grasping, unreliable, and extravagant in financial matters. Moreover, the theatrical business in America was a precarious one. Few managers were able to make it pay well permanently, and others besides Dunlap found it ruinous. His worst obstacles, however, lay within himself. Inside knowledge of the theatre he had none when he became one of its directors. In his relations with others he lacked self-assertiveness. His good nature and love of peace made him an easy prey to imposition. But his chief deficiency was absence of business foresight. He was willing to assume large obligations without any prospect of ever being able to meet them. In his optimism he trusted too much to the future, yet for him the future had an uncomfortable habit of proving less encouraging than the present.

Dunlap's methods of conducting the theatre did not materially differ from those of his predecessors, but he instituted three changes which were

of importance in the development of our dramatic art. 1. Having had experience as a painter, he emphasized scenery more than had been done before. The scenic effects at the Park Theatre at their best must have been entirely adequate. 2. During the period of his control, American plays gained a more prominent place on the New York stage than they had previously held. This was owing in a large measure to the number of his own plays which he brought out, but at least a dozen other playwrights were represented. 3. His most distinct and significant contribution was a long series of French and German plays, so presented as to develop popular interest in the dramatic literature of Europe.

The managerial career of William Dunlap provides an illuminating commentary on the state of culture in New York about the beginning of the last century. Here was a man with enough faith in the moral and intellectual benefits of a properly conducted stage to expend a large sum of money and enormous labor on the project, not primarily in the hope of financial returns, but rather for the improvement of his fellow-citizens. But culture was distinctly a matter of the individual and not of the masses. The theatre-going public, with little regard for the classics of English drama and still less for the productions of native playwrights, required novelties and cheap amusements. And when the supply fell below the demand, they permitted the exponent of a cultural theatre to become a bankrupt.

CHAPTER II

Biography from 1805 to 1839

I

WILLIAM DUNLAP retired from the theatre with the realization that he had done his best. He forfeited neither his self-respect nor the esteem of his friends. That he retained the good-will of his company is attested by the performance given for his benefit on the 21st of June, 1805.

But Dunlap was not merely a bankrupt. He was also a debtor to the United States Government on the bond of a New Jersey marshal who had proved a defaulter. It was imperative, therefore, that he hit upon a source of revenue. Apparently his first thought was to adopt the profession of letters.[1] But while literary plans were maturing, bread must be earned. The most immediate expedient for him was to resume his brush and palette, which had been but rarely employed during the last dozen years. Miniature painting on ivory had become a profitable branch of the profession. Edward Malbone, the recognized leader of this department, was working in Boston at the height of his success, and other able men were operating

[1] "Life of Brown," Vol. II, p. 112. In answering the announcement of his friend's bankruptcy, Brown spoke discouragingly of Dunlap's plan for a literary career.

elsewhere. Because of the popularity of this branch, Dunlap resolved to attempt painting in miniature, though ignorant of some of the essentials of the process.

He very soon found Perth Amboy an unproductive field; so with his paints and a few ivories he started forth as an itinerant artist, as many another American painter had done before him. Albany was the city to which he first journeyed. Here he was cordially welcomed by his old friend, James Kent, now a dignified judge. But Albany did not take kindly to miniature painting, and the artist moved on to Boston, where he arrived with $6 in his pocket. Sitters were readily obtained at $15 a picture, and soon Dunlap was able to send money home for the support of his family. His relations with his fellow artists were very pleasant. The acquaintance with Gilbert Stuart, begun years before in London, was renewed; and Malbone, seeing his deficiency in miniature work, instructed him in the method of preparing ivories for the reception of paint, and thus enabled him to improve his pictures.

After spending September and October in Boston, he set his face toward Washington, pausing to visit his family and to practise his vocation for a few days at Philadelphia and Baltimore. In Washington he associated with Samuel Mitchill and Joel Barlow, met President Jefferson and Vice-President Clinton, and made a miniature of Jefferson from a portrait lent by Mrs. Madison. He accomplished the main purpose of his journey,

which was to learn what measures to take in the case of the defaulting marshal. What those measures were we do not know, but Dunlap has said that Gallatin put him at rest concerning the debt.[2]

In the spring of 1806 the artist was back in Perth Amboy. One day while working in his mother's garden—the garden he had planted with fruit trees in his more opulent days—he was surprised by the sudden appearance of T. A. Cooper. The actor, having recently become lessee of the Park Theatre, made Dunlap on the spot an offer of the general superintendency of his theatrical concerns at a liberal salary. The ex-manager could not refuse this opportunity of a steady and substantial income, and once more he became a figure in the New York play-house. This offer must have been particularly welcome, since it proved that one of the most influential of his former associates still had full confidence in him. Concerning his experiences during this second connection with the stage he has left very little record, but we learn that among his duties were the care of the finances and the management of the institution in Cooper's absence.[3]

One of Dunlap's first undertakings after assuming his new position was the publication of his selected dramas. Pursuant to his plan for literary

[2] For the foregoing see "Arts of Design," Vol. I, pp. 268–71. Unless otherwise stated, my authorities through this chapter are the "Arts of Design" and the "American Theatre."

[3] "New York Mirror," Vol. X, p. 266; "Arts of Design," Vol. I, p. 272.

activity, he issued a proposal for publishing ten volumes of his plays by subscription at $1 a volume. The plays with a stage career were promised, as well as a few that had been neither acted nor printed, and many were to be nearly rewritten.[4]

The first volume of the "Dramatic Works of William Dunlap" was printed by T. and G. Palmer of Philadelphia in September, 1806. It contained, as frontispiece, a portrait of Mrs. Wignell (for-

[4] The contents were to be as follows:
Vol. I. "The Father of an Only Child," "Darby's Return," "Lord Leicester; or, The Fatal Deception," "Fontainville Abbey."
Vol. II. "The Feudal Baron," "William Tell; or, The Mountaineers of Switzerland," "Tell Truth and Shame the Devil," "André."
Vol. III. "The Knight's Adventure; or, The Man of Fortitude," "The Stranger," "Lovers' Vows," "Sterne's Maria."
Vol. IV. "Count Benyowski," "The Italian Father," "False Shame," "The Force of Calumny."
Vol. V. "The Virgin of the Sun," "Pizarro in Peru," "The Stranger's Birthday," "La Perouse," "The Wild Goose Chace."
Vol. VI. "School for Soldiers," "The Robbery," "Fraternal Discord," "The Knight of Guadalquiver."
Vol. VII. "Abaellino," "Abbé de l'Epée," "The Merry Gardener," "Where Is He?"
Vol. VIII. "Peter the Great," "The Voice of Nature," "The Blind Boy," "The Good Neighbor."
Vol. IX. "The Soldier of '76," "The Glory of Columbia —Her Yeomanry!" "Bonaparte in England," "Indians in England," "The Proverb."
Vol. X. "The Wife of Two Husbands," "Nina," "Lewis of Monte Blanco," "One and Twenty." (The last title is apparently a misnomer for "Forty and Twenty.")
See "New York Evening Post," July 2, 1805, for the above.

merly Mrs. Merry) by Dunlap, and a preface to the series in which the author said:

"The pieces now offered to be assayed in the closet have already passed through the mint of the theatre, and received the stamp of public approbation. This last trial will ascertain their value, by determining the quantity of their alloy. . . .

"Impressed with the fullest conviction that the stage is a vehicle by which moral instruction may be, with much effect, conveyed to the inhabitants of great cities, it has been my study, while writing plays, to make Pleasure subservient to the cause of Virtue. With these views, I trust I have not been so far unsuccessful that any parent need hesitate to put my volumes in the hands of his child, or the most scrupulous reader fear to meet passages that would wound Decency, or suffuse the cheek of Modesty with a blush."

In respect to the translations, he had some strong words for the English playwrights who condemned German drama while imitating it.

The plays, especially "The Father," were more or less revised, and each was preceded by a brief preface. These four pieces are also to be found separately, each with the date of 1807, and with the imprint of David Longworth of New York, but with the pagination of the 1806 volume. The explanation seems to be that many copies of the book which were not sold, were broken up the year after it appeared and put out separately. In

1808 David Longworth, who was publishing the "English and American Stage," issued other copies of Dunlap's book as Volume XXII of his series, with an additional title-page.

The second volume, which did not come out till 1816, contained "The Voice of Nature," "Fraternal Discord," "The Italian Father," and "The Good Neighbor" instead of the dramas announced in the prospectus. It bore the imprint of Longworth, and was formed by binding together these four plays as already published individually. Volume III, which made its appearance the same year, was constructed similarly, and contained "The Wife of Two Husbands," "Abaellino," "Lovers' Vows," and "Peter the Great." If further volumes were issued I have found no trace of them. The conclusion one draws from this rather complicated publishing game is that Dunlap's plays did not sell very briskly, so that it was necessary to present them in various forms in order to exhaust the editions.

The New York theatre seems to have been in a fairly prosperous way at this time, for in 1807 the interior of the building was completely remodeled and its capacity increased by the addition of a fourth row of boxes, which brought the seating accommodations up to about twenty-two hundred.[5]

In the autumn of 1808 the Park was opened under the management of Cooper and a new partner, Stephen Price, who was destined to be-

[5] "American Theatre," pp. 343–4; Dunlap, "Memoirs of Cooke," New York edition, Vol. II, p. 180.

come, in the course of years, the leading theatrical magnate of America. On him and Dunlap devolved much of the responsibility of directing the establishment, since it was now Cooper's practice to perform two nights each week in Philadelphia.

Boy actors were at this period the popular novelty. London had had its Master Betty, together with a flock of imitators, and in 1809 New York had its Master Payne. John Howard Payne was a youthful prodigy who, at the age of sixteen, made his bow on the New York stage as *Young Norval* in "Douglas," and followed with several tragic parts from Shakespeare and Kotzebue. His acting was rewarded with unusual applause, and according to Dunlap was extremely pleasing and full of talent.

In the spring of 1810 Cooper went abroad, to be gone for nearly a year. Under the direction of Price and his assistant the theatre resumed operations in the fall, but the patronage was very scanty until the arrival of George Frederick Cooke in November brought the Park a period of the greatest prosperity it had ever known. Cooke was an English actor who by 1800 had attained to leading parts at Covent Garden. He soon outdistanced all rivals save John Philip Kemble, but his persistent dissipation and his moral and professional irregularities earned him a reputation not wholly enviable; and when Cooper offered him a position in America at twenty-five guineas a week, he accepted without reluctance.

Reaching New York on November 16, 1810,

Cooke put up at the Tontine Coffee-House, where Dunlap called on him the day of his arrival, with no small surprise at the vigor and health and gracious address of a man who was reputed to be a sot. On the 21st of the month the great actor made his début in "Richard III" before a packed house. New York had never witnessed a tragedian who could approach him in power and majesty, and the town was captivated. On the third night he was somewhat the worse for conviviality, his voice failed him, and the play ended in pantomime; but the audience supposed he was suffering from a cold. At his benefit performance a few weeks later he had even less command of himself. The drama was "Cato," but he spouted Shakespeare and incoherencies of his own in place of Addison. The next night's receipts fell from $1878 to $467. But the average for this run of seventeen nights was $1269, the like of which New York had never seen. After a short engagement at Boston, Cooke returned to the Park; but curiosity was now satisfied, the public was disgusted with his conduct in "Cato," and the receipts dropped to an average of about $500 a performance.

It was arranged that Cooke should go to Philadelphia, and Price bestowed upon Dunlap the unwelcome honor of accompanying him in the capacity of guardian, an office which he accepted in the characteristic hope that he might have a good influence. On March 18, 1811, the pair started south. They stopped for the night with Dunlap's family in Perth Amboy, where Cooke

displayed all the polish and charm of which he was master, and passed one of the most innocent and restful nights of his life. Philadelphia was the scene of another histrionic triumph. So great was the demand for seats that some ardent souls remained on the steps of the theatre from Sunday morning till Monday morning in order to be sure of obtaining tickets. The average receipts for this run of twenty nights were over $1100. Cooke drank plentifully during the Philadelphia engagement, but seldom to the detriment of his acting, thanks to the vigilance of his guardian, who sometimes drank more wine than was agreeable to his abstemious convictions in order to deprive George Frederick of it. The lion, on the whole, seems to have been fairly obedient to his keeper. On May 1 Dunlap departed for home, leaving affairs in the hands of Cooper, who had just returned from abroad.[6]

The sojourn in Philadelphia was not without an element of sadness because of the absence of Brown, who had died in 1810. In the Diary Dunlap wrote:

"I called yesterday for the second time on the widow of my friend, Charles Brockden Brown, and found her at home, and in company with his mother, likewise a widow since my last visit to this place. I saw the twin boys who used to be my playthings. I took them on my knees. I

[6] For preceding paragraphs see "Memoirs of Cooke."

kissed them, and remembered former days—poor things!"[7]

His position having become disagreeable through no fault of Cooper's, Dunlap resigned his assistant managership toward the close of 1811, and withdrew permanently from the theatrical business.[8] This period of nearly six years was a very unproductive one. Perhaps all his time was occupied with his duties; at any rate, he did nothing more than revive a few of his old plays and write a song, "The Freedom of the Seas," which was sung at the Park on July 4, 1810. The newspaper comment was, "Sung with unbounded applause." The song, which was inspired by English impressment of our seamen, comprises six rather spirited stanzas, each ending with this refrain:

"We'll be free of the sea in despite of every foe,
Though tyrants frown and cannon roar and the
angry tempests blow."

Dunlap was once more without an income, and once more he turned to miniature painting. He confined himself at first to New York, whither he removed his family from Perth Amboy, where they had resided since the bankruptcy.

On June 18, 1812, war was declared on England, and the patriotic Dunlap immediately wrote a song,

[7] From sketch of Brown in "National Portrait Gallery of Distinguished Americans." Conducted by Herring and Longacre. 1834–6. Vol. III.

[8] "Arts of Design," Vol. I, p. 272; "Memoirs of Cooke," Vol. II, p. 354.

"Yankee Chronology," which was sung on the 4th of July. It was soon augmented into an interlude, "Yankee Chronology; or, Huzza for the Constitution!" and given a dozen times during the conflict to enthusiastic audiences. In December he contributed another war song, "Yankee Tars," a composition of ten quatrains boasting of the vast superiority of our naval fighters. During the month it was occasionally sung as a solo at the theatre.

The portrait business falling off in consequence of the war, the painter tried to increase his income by further literary ventures. Cooke, half in sport, had requested him to write his biography, and in the same spirit Dunlap had agreed to do so. After the actor's death in September, 1812, the task was pressed upon him by friends, so that he decided to undertake it.[9] With the aid of John Dunlap, his son, the work progressed rapidly, and was published in two volumes by Longworth early in 1813, with a portrait of the player from Dunlap's miniature. A London edition was also in contemplation. On December 30 Washington Irving had written to his brother, Peter, in Liverpool that Dunlap had almost completed a life of Cooke and desired to send him a manuscript to be disposed of in England. The letter ended, "as he is an old friend and a very worthy man, I make no doubt you will do everything in your power to benefit him."[10] The prospects were good for some

[9] Preface to "Memoirs of Cooke."

[10] P. M. Irving, "Life and Letters of Washington Irving," Philadelphia, 1872, Vol. I, p. 293.

remuneration from the London edition, but a curious complication destroyed this hope. The author's account of the transaction is this:

"While I was in Boston [see below] I received letters from P. Irving, Esq., informing me that he had agreed with Miller of London to publish my life of Cooke and divide the profit; but before I left it, I learned that John Howard Payne, having found a copy in a ship from New York, with a view to serve me, sold it to Colbourne [*sic*], who got out an edition before, (or on the same day) with Miller's, and the two publishers agreed to make the best for themselves, and sink me."[11]

The impression, which this conveys, that the book was actually published by the two houses is erroneous, I think. I find no trace of an edition by Miller. Probably Colburn anticipated him sufficiently to quash his edition altogether. In 1815 Colburn reprinted the work, indicating that it met a fair sale in England, though the price was one guinea.

Another literary project of 1813 was the founding of a magazine. In April the first number of the "Monthly Recorder" made its appearance. Like various other enterprises of the editor's, the magazine soon began running him into debt; so he packed up his painting outfit and started north with the twofold purpose of making miniatures and securing subscriptions. He stopped at Hartford, Providence, and Boston, and obtained some sitters, but the "Recorder" met no encouragement

[11] "Arts of Design," Vol. I, p. 273.

and died for want of sustenance in the fifth month of its existence. The five numbers were later collected in one volume as "A Record, Literary and Political, of Five Months in the Year 1813. By William Dunlap and Others."

On his return from Boston, the artist, at Stuart's suggestion, turned his attention to oil portraits and practically abandoned miniatures. Since 1805, when he entered this branch of the profession ignorant of some of its essentials, he had made distinct progress. A collection of sixteen of his miniatures was sold at Philadelphia in 1905. The catalogue of the sale, compiled by S. V. Henkels, stated that they were "executed in the highest style of the art," an opinion which the accompanying reproductions confirmed. Professor Theodore S. Woolsey of Yale, who has given special attention to Dunlap as a painter, says: "As a miniaturist he excelled, showing charm of color, accurate drawing, and considerable power of characterization."[12]

Once more Dunlap was interrupted in the pursuit of his vocation. In 1814 he was appointed assistant paymaster-general of the State militia. This position involved much traveling about from New York City to Buffalo, and much mingling with many races—Indian, Dutch, English, and Yankee. His portfolio always accompanied him, and it was his custom to arise early and walk several miles from head-quarters to make water-color sketches of places of beauty or interest. From Buffalo he

[12] "Yale Review," new series, Vol. III, p. 779.

walked to Niagara, where he spent four days sketching the falls.[13]

During his incumbency of this office, Dunlap found time for a certain amount of writing. In 1814 he did some hack work on the Napoleonic wars.[14] Of much more importance was the "Life of Charles Brockden Brown," begun at the request of Elijah Brown in 1813, published at Philadelphia two years later, and at London in 1822. In commemoration of the last battle of the war, fought on January 8, 1815, he wrote a play, "The Battle of New Orleans," which appears to have been staged July 4, 1816, and repeated occasionally for several years thereafter.[15]

II

THE State position came to an end late in 1816, and for the last time Dunlap returned to professional painting. Since he was now about to enter on his major activities as an artist, a few words

[13] Professor Woolsey has about forty of these water-colors, including views of Lake George, Lake Champlain, Niagara, and Saratoga, which he pronounces "rather crude representations." See "Yale Review," new series, Vol. III, p. 780.

[14] See *post*, pp. 250–1.

[15] Mr. Oscar Wegelin, "Early American Plays," Publications of the Dunlap Society, second series, No. 10, 1900, pp. 39, 49, puts its first appearance on July 4, 1815, and says C. E. Grice's "Battle of New Orleans" was acted a year later. There is no authority in the newspaper advertisements or in Ireland for the earlier date, while all indications strongly suggest that it was Dunlap's play which began its career in 1816.

concerning the status of American art may be appropriate. John Singleton Copley, whose uncharming but veracious portraits first gave this country some artistic standing abroad, had died in 1815. Benjamin West was still alive, though seventy-eight years of age. Since 1763 he had resided in England, where he had become the unchallenged leader in historical and allegorical painting. His studio had been the class-room of American aspirants, and almost all the important painters in the United States at this time had been his pupils.

Of the earlier generation of West's pupils were Gilbert Stuart and John Trumbull, whom Dunlap met in London in 1784. Stuart, who returned to his native land in 1792 and remained until his death in 1828, absorbed none of West's method. He confined himself to portraits, which he executed in a sure, fresh, and brilliant manner that was all his own, and that still gives him rank among our greatest painters. Trumbull, who finally settled in New York in 1815, was greatly influenced by his master's historical work, a department in which he likewise achieved prominence. He also possessed unusual ability for portraiture, but in both branches he often fell into mediocrity.

Among the next generation of those who studied in West's atelier the most able were Thomas Sully, Washington Allston, and Samuel F. B. Morse. Sully spent but a year in England, yet on his return in 1810 he produced some good historical canvases, and became a portraitist second

William Dunlap

From a rare contemporary lithograph

only to Stuart. Allston, while abroad, painted numerous imaginative pictures with more real character and harmony than West's. After his return in 1818, he was recognized as the king of American art, though he did but little work from that time on. Morse, who studied under Allston more than under West, came back to the United States in 1815. He was an able artist and painted various celebrities, but he gained no great success, and after several years turned his attention to electricity.

John Vanderlyn had the distinction of being the first American to learn his craft in France and to acquire French methods of solidity and accuracy. He painted some very beautiful figures while abroad, and after his home-coming in 1815, he made portraits of many distinguished citizens, as well as several large show pictures.[16]

When Dunlap finally took up his brush late in 1816, the United States possessed a few highly gifted artists and a large body of minor painters of more or less ability. The prevailing influence was English, and portraiture was the general occupation, though historical and imaginative subjects were sometimes attempted. New York was now the art center of the country, as Boston and Philadelphia had been before.

For several years the city had had an organization of artists. Founded in 1801, it was incor-

[16] For preceding paragraphs see "Arts of Design"; Samuel Isham, "History of American Painting," New York, 1905.

porated seven years later as the American Academy of Fine Arts. After a dormant period, the institution was revived in 1816, in which resuscitation Dunlap had a hand. In 1817 Trumbull was elected president and Dunlap a director. The latter was also made keeper and librarian at a salary of $200, with a room for professional purposes. The first exhibition ever given by the Academy was held in 1816. The second took place the next year, and to it Dunlap contributed three pictures: "A Portrait of a Lady," "Mary Magdalen," and "Christ on the Mount of Olives."[17]

In his new quarters Dunlap painted an encouraging number of portraits for a couple of years,[18] but in 1819 his business fell off, and in the fall he resolved to try his fortunes in Virginia. After stopping a day or two with Sully in Philadelphia, he reached Norfolk on October 23, and there he remained till spring.

The third available volume of the Diary covers the Norfolk residence, and gives an interesting picture of Dunlap as an artist. I shall select a few details. His first customer was the host of his hotel, who ordered portraits of his two daughters at $25 each. Soon the commissions began coming in sufficient numbers to justify him in fitting up a painting and exhibition room. Here he was visited by many people who seemed to find

[17] "American Monthly Magazine," Vol. I, p. 199.

[18] A family event of 1818 was the death of the artist's mother on the 27th of December at the age of eighty-five years. (Dunlap family Bible.)

his studio a place of pleasant diversion; among his visitors he noted in particular numerous beautiful women and a band of Indians. His orders kept him steadily busy and brought in comfortable returns, although one patron paid with hams and other produce, and a second with lottery tickets which drew blanks. Southern hospitality was a source of much pleasure to him; he found the food to his taste, except for the butter. He was sound in body and cheerful in mind. On December 2 he wrote:

"Tomorrow will be seven weeks since I left home & six since I arrived in Norfolk—I have enjoyed good health—I have had my mind wholesomely employed generally, and I believe more uniformly so than for a long time before I left home. I have drank no wine & no spirits in any shape except a very moderate portion with my dinner—I have been better in mind & body than when I took wine at my dinner. I think I have improved in my painting—I have more confidence in my powers, more facility a better style generally—I have begun Eleven portraits amounting to $315. . . . For all this and much much more, I thank my Creator & incomprehensibly great & good Benefactor."[19]

In his leisure he frequented the theatre, made free to him by the manager, went to church, wrote often to his wife and son, and read largely as always. Among the books read were Rousseau's

[19] Diary, Vol. XXIV, pp. 54-5.

"Confessions" (in French), "Ferdinand Count Fathom," "Humphrey Clinker," "Tom Jones," "Ivanhoe," "Don Juan," and the Bible with Clarke's commentary.

From his remarks on the Bible reading it is evident that Dunlap had undergone a change of heart since the days of Godwinian heresy. He had given up his radicalism as had Brown several years before his death. Dr. Clarke's biblical criticism, which gave various translations for the same passage, he felt to be dangerous because it tended to unsettle belief and to raise doubt as to the infallibility of the Scriptures.

On the 24th of April he left Norfolk after a residence of twenty-six weeks during which he had painted at least thirty-six portraits, including a few miniatures,—a very good rate of production. He had received about $1100 in all, yet he complained that he would reach New York almost as poor as he left it, because of large expenses. However, he consoled himself with the assurance that he had supported his family and opened a source of income for the future.[20]

Dunlap now tried to pursue his vocation in New York, but with no success; so he determined on Lower Canada, whither he departed in August, 1820. At Montreal he found employment for two months, and then moved on to Quebec for a

[20] Owing to his absence from New York, Dunlap resigned as keeper and librarian of the Academy. At the January election he was reëlected a director, as he had been each year since 1817. This was his final term.

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

week or two. Here he did not fail to make an excursion to the Plains of Abraham, on which his father had fought. His prosperity in the north was not great and his estimate of the Canadians not high; he found them cold and cautious in contrast with the warm Virginians. But he seems to have created a favorable impression at Montreal, for one of the newspapers spoke of him as a highly cultivated gentleman, and compared him with West, Reynolds, and Rubens!

Norfolk was again to be Dunlap's winter abode. He arrived late in November, accompanied by his wife, and opened an exhibition room adorned with about sixty pictures of his own. Again he painted a goodly number of portraits, and returned home in June, 1821.

The exhibition of large paintings was one of the commercial enterprises of the time, and Dunlap, in the hope of swelling his slender income, set about producing a show picture. For material he instinctively turned to his master, West, and chose the rejection of Christ. He had never seen West's painting of this name, but he had read the artist's description of it, and had seen engravings of the separate groups. On this basis, with the aid of the scriptural account, Dunlap composed his picture. Before leaving Norfolk he had made a small sketch, 30 by 36 inches. On his return to New York he procured a canvas 12 by 18 feet, placed it, in the absence of a better studio, in the attic of his house, and went to work. All summer he toiled in the heat and bad light of his

stuffy garret, and in spite of adverse conditions the result was very gratifying to him. In November he took his canvas to Norfolk, where he continued to work at it when not engaged on portraits. "Christ Rejected" was finished in March, 1822, and placed on exhibition. Dunlap printed a pamphlet containing West's description. He expressed his obligation to that painter's treatment of the subject, but asserted that the composition, coloring, and principal figures were entirely his own. The picture represented Christ, bound and wearing the crown of thorns, standing before Pilate, while the populace demand his crucifixion. In June Dunlap moved his painting from Norfolk to Philadelphia. He was pleased with its impression on the public, and surprised at its excellence when shown to advantage. In July he took it to Boston and Portland, at the latter town receiving from $200 to $300 in two weeks; then he sent it on tour about the East in care of an attendant. Subsequently it was exhibited with some profit in many parts of the United States, getting as far west as Urbana, Ohio.

During the winter of 1822–3 Dunlap remained in New York, but received few commissions because, as he frankly admitted, there were better painters in the market. He busied himself, however, making a preliminary sketch for another large picture. The spring and summer found him in Utica and Saratoga, painting portraits and exhibiting.

In the winter of 1823–4 he obtained a big cloth,

nailed it to the floor of his attic, and applied white lead. On this improvised canvas he began to paint "The Bearing of the Cross" from the sketch made the previous year. Christ was portrayed sinking under his burden on the road to Calvary. This picture was also sent on tour, but with less satisfactory results than in the former case. During the winter the artist became a member of the Lunch Club, with which J. F. Cooper, Halleck, Bryant, Morse, Bleecker, and Brevoort were affiliated.

In November, 1824, Dunlap was astonished by a summons to Washington on a charge of having defaulted as assistant paymaster to the extent of several thousand dollars. Investigation, however, brought the deficiency down to one dollar, and that was found to have arisen from an error in addition.

The production of other large pictures continued to occupy our artist. Early in 1825 he began a representation of Christ on Calvary, a subject which West had treated. As usual, he first made a cartoon, 25 by 30 inches, and sketched separate studies from life for the principal groups. Before this painting was completed, he commenced and finished another in imitation of West's "Death on the Pale Horse," of which he had obtained an etching and a printed description. Dunlap's picture was completed in less than three months. It illustrated St. John's vision of the opening of the first four seals as recorded in Revelation, Chapter VI. In the center, Death, seated on a pale horse

and followed by the ministers of Hell, was seen rushing forward over the bodies of his victims. He was accompanied by three other mounted figures, symbolizing the Gospel, the wars which spread the Gospel, and the Judgment. At one side a group of beasts were engaged in the destruction of man. This canvas was successfully shown at the American Academy for three months, and later sent on the road to the profit of its owner and the intense admiration of the people, if we may judge from the poems and press notices it inspired. "Terrible sublimity," "by one of the most eminent artists of the age," "a fearful representation," "the greatest painting yet," were some of the extravagant terms employed. The picture was sold in 1833 for $500 and continued its itinerancy until 1840 at least.[21]

While Dunlap was busy in the painting of historical canvases, civil war had developed within the artistic fraternity of New York. The American Academy was an academy in name only. No school of instruction was maintained, and the young artists who attempted to use the privilege of drawing from the Academy's casts were subjected to discourteous treatment,—a policy dictated, so there was reason to believe, by President Trumbull. Membership in the organization was open to all on payment of $25, and of the eleven directors, only three could be artists. Thus the city was

[21] Descriptive pamphlet, Boston, 1840; "New York Evening Post," October 28, 1825, and following issues; Diary, Vol. XXX, p. 50.

treated to the curious spectacle of an art association run by lawyers and shopkeepers. Naturally the artists felt this an insult to their intelligence and a curtailment of their liberty, as well as a hindrance to the progress of American art.

In 1825, at the suggestion of Morse, the New York Drawing Association, for the purpose of promoting native art and assisting students, was formed with Dunlap as one of the members. The association met three evenings a week to draw. One night Trumbull stalked in with the matriculation book of the Academy under his arm, which he demanded that they sign. They refused, but offered to unite with the older institution if six artists were elected to the board of directors. At the request of the Academy, the Drawing Association chose six of its members, one of whom was Dunlap, with the understanding that they would be placed on the board. Four of them not being Academicians, $100 was put up to render them eligible. But only two of the six were elected, and they immediately resigned. The Academy, however, retained the $100.

Thus betrayed, the Drawing Association resolved to exist independently, and early in 1826 organized itself into the National Academy of Design. The membership included Morse, Dunlap, Inman, Peale, Ingham, Cole, and Durand. Morse was elected president, two lecturing professors were appointed, and an exhibition was immediately projected, with Dunlap as treasurer and a member of the committee on arrangements. The first

picture display, consisting of one hundred and seventy entries (eleven of them were Dunlap's), was held in the second story of an ordinary dwelling-house at the corner of Broadway and Reade Street.

At the start the National encountered much opposition and enmity from the American Academy, and a great deal of recrimination was indulged in on both sides, in which Dunlap's pen was not idle. But in a few years the new association was beyond the fear of hostility, while the American was slowly dying.[22]

For the next year or two we find Dunlap painting portraits at New York and elsewhere, working on his "Calvary," and exhibiting his three large pictures about the country with varying success. Now they were the inspiration of sermons; now they were condemned by the pulpit, and the agent was seized for violating the law against puppet shows.

In 1827 the artist once more turned to dramatic writing. The Bowery Theatre, a sumptuous new house, which had been opened in the fall of 1826,[23] contracted with him to provide stage material which might parallel and compete with that of its rival, the Park. At the latter, Fitzball's "Flying Dutchman" was making a great run. Late in

[22] See "Arts of Design," Vol. II, Chapter XXI; T. S. Cummings, "Historical Annals of the National Academy of Design," Philadelphia, 1865.

[23] Ireland, Vol. I, pp. 521–2. The capacity of the theatre was about 3000. It contained the first gas-lighted stage in America.

May the Bowery, after considerable horn-blowing, came out with a play of the same name and with the same *dramatis personæ,* which proved its mainstay during the spring and summer. Dunlap undoubtedly had a hand in the piece, though probably he did nothing more than revise Fitzball.[24]

In February, 1828, "Thirty Years; or, The Life of a Gamester," translated from the French, was presented at the Bowery in opposition to "The Gambler's Fate," a British translation which was being featured at the Park. The American version found favor, and was repeated more than a dozen times in the course of the year.

Dunlap's final play, "A Trip to Niagara; or, Travellers in America," was brought out at the Bowery on November 28, 1828. It was a farce, written to exploit a new scenic device called the Eidophusicon or Moving Diorama, by which a series of scenes could be displayed in rapid succession, so as to produce the illusion of actually passing the objects represented. The Diorama was already in use at the Park in connection with Moncrieff's "London and Paris," but the Bowery threw its rival into the shade by the size and magnificence of the spectacle involved in "A Trip to Niagara." A panorama of the Hudson River was shown, composed of eighteen faithful reproductions, painted on the spot by competent artists,

[24] I base the assumption of Dunlap's responsibility on the fact that he included a play of this name in his bibliography, and that the "New York Mirror," Vol. X, p. 266, named "The Flying Dutchman" among his plays written for the Bowery.

and so arranged as to pass before the eye much as though the spectator were in reality steaming up the river. After exhausting the glories of the Hudson, the Diorama followed the slender thread of the plot across the State, and ended with a "sublime" view of Niagara Falls. The entire series employed the unprecedented canvas area of 25,000 square feet, so it was said. Of course the play, with this gorgeous attraction, was a smashing success until the novelty-loving New Yorkers demanded some other curiosity. It was given fifteen times the first month, a record which not even Kotzebue in his palmiest days could approach; but after nine or ten performances during the next three months it disappeared.[25]

Meanwhile "Calvary," the painting on which Dunlap had labored for three years, and which he considered his masterpiece, was completed and shown at New York in May, 1828. It depicted the preparations for the sacrifice the moment before the crucifixion. In August a Dunlap gallery, containing "Calvary," "Christ Rejected," "Death on the Pale Horse," and several smaller pictures, was opened at the National Academy.[26] But this exhibition did not prove profitable, and the new painting was sent on tour. It met much hearty praise for its energy, its harmony of color, and its moral effect; but more than once it was criticized

[25] "New York Evening Post," November 28, 1828, and following issues; "New York Mirror," Vol. VI, pp. 159, 171.

[26] "New York Evening Post," August 8, 1828.

for the comparative obscurity of Christ. The eye was first attracted by the various groups, it was stated, and thus the picture failed to create an impression of epic unity.[27]

The artist's income, never large, had fallen to a very low figure at this period. His portrait commissions were few, the returns from the show pictures were slight, and for the Bowery plays he received, as he said, "meagre compensation for poor commodities." In the hope of remuneration he began the "History of the American Theatre."

About this time he became a member of one of the leading social organizations of the city, the Sketch Club, composed of artists and literary men, who met to draw and discuss art. Dunlap's unusual club record, comprising the most reputable societies of his day, is proof of his powers of friendship and the attractiveness of his personality.

Resolving to tempt fortune in a new field, our itinerant went to Vermont in the summer of 1829, where he painted portraits to some profit and enjoyed the hospitality of the people. Thither he returned at intervals to paint and exhibit.

The National Academy was growing comfortably, the number of students was increasing, and more instructors were required. Accordingly in March, 1830, Dunlap was appointed Lecturer on Historic Painting, and in 1832 was made Professor of that subject, in which office he continued until 1839. Among his colleagues was Bryant, Pro-

[27] "New York Mirror," Vol. V, p. 359; "American Monthly Magazine," Vol. II, pp. 263–4.

fessor of Mythology and Ancient History.[28] But the position carried no salary, and the painter was still sorely straitened.

Sometime in the spring of 1830 he gained a little relief in a very pleasing manner. He received an anonymous letter containing $100, which purported to come from Brown and other friends in the Elysian Fields, who, having found the bill floating about in that region where all things are to be had without money and without price, had sent it to one who could put it to good use. The recipient never discovered his benefactor.

The following August was spent near Lake Champlain in the pursuit of his profession. While there he suffered a severe attack from an ailment which he designated merely as his chronic disease. For sixteen days he lay abed in grave danger, but he recovered and finished his portraits before returning home.

The address to the students of the Academy at the awarding of premiums in April, 1831, was delivered by Dunlap. He laid especial stress on the necessity for freedom and independence in an artist's activities. Patronage he declared to be obnoxious to a republican. Against the principle of patronage and protection, on which the American Academy was built, the founders of the National had rebelled. The address was not a particularly creditable effort; it was rambling and unnecessarily hostile toward the rival institution.

[28] Catalogues of the exhibitions of the National Academy of Design; Cummings, p. 118.

At the annual election of the National Academy in May, 1831, Dunlap was made vice-president. This office was equivalent to a temporary presidency since President Morse was absent in Europe. Another show picture was hastily turned out this year, "The Attack on the Louvre," an episode in the revolution of 1830. It was pronounced a spirited and vivid canvas, but it failed on the road.[29]

The artist's finances remaining in a gloomy condition, he cast about for some means of relief. Two lectures on art which he delivered for the benefit of the Mercantile Library Association gave him the idea of placing his more important paintings in a room and lecturing on them. For this purpose the gallery of the National Academy, now located in Clinton Hall, was secured, and the historical pictures were put on display. The four biblical subjects, "Christ Rejected," "The Bearing of the Cross," "Calvary," and "Death on the Pale Horse," were arranged in a semi-circle to produce a progressive panorama,—a series containing seven or eight hundred figures and nearly a thousand square feet of canvas. The doors were opened in February, 1832, and the public was urged by various periodicals to attend in large numbers in order to relieve the distress of the worthy artist. Two or three evenings each week Dunlap lectured on his works, a feature which grew in popularity until the gallery was filled

[29] Cummings, p. 122; "New York Mirror," Vol. VIII, p. 294; Vol. IX, p. 254.

every evening it was open. The conclusion of one of these addresses is interesting for the personal note it struck. After describing "Christ Rejected" the speaker said:

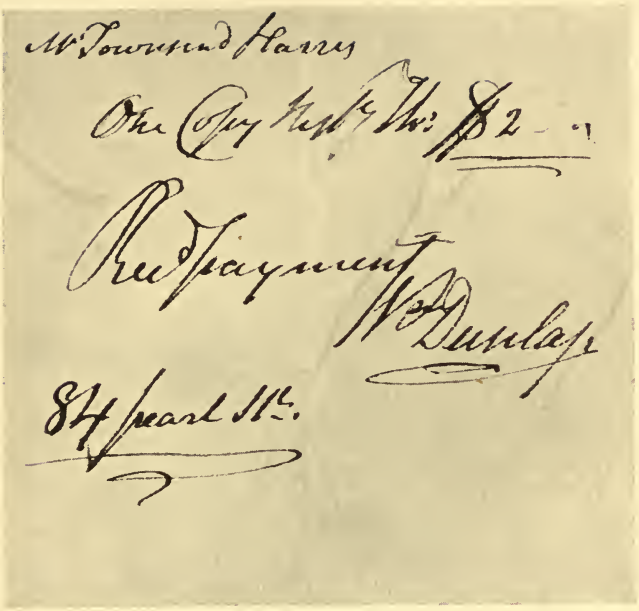
"Such appears [*sic*] to have been the events which imagination had presented to the painter's eye, which, like the poet's, ought to glance from heaven to earth—from earth to heaven; but is too often chained by circumstances to a lot and thoughts very far below the exalted sphere to which he aspires. His ardent fancy shows him these scenes of interest and of glory; but he has to labor often in poverty, and disappointment, and neglect, while striving to fix them on his canvas."

In the spring this exhibition was moved to a museum at the corner of Broadway and Anthony Street, but here it was a total failure because of an epidemic of Asiatic cholera.[30]

The year 1832 was an important one in Dunlap's literary life inasmuch as it saw the publication of his "History of the American Theatre." It was dedicated to his friend, James Fenimore Cooper. It came from the Harpers' press about the first of November, and since it was issued by subscription, the author was at least insured against loss. In 1833 it was printed by Bentley of London in two volumes.[31] From the English and American edi-

[30] See "New York Mirror," Vol. IX, pp. 254, 299, 310; "New York Evening Post," June 25, 1832; "Arts of Design," Vol. I, p. 309.

[31] This edition is sometimes found in one volume with a new title-page and a frontispiece by Cruikshank.


Mr Townsend Harris
One Copy Hist. Thr. $2 - -
Recd payment
Wm Dunlap
84 pearl St.

Townsend Harris's Receipt from William Dunlap
for his copy of the
"History of the American Theatre"

tions the writer eventually gained some remuneration.

One of the most pleasant passages in Dunlap's biography, and one which testifies to the regard in which he was held by his fellow townsmen, belongs to the year 1833. A group of citizens resolved to aid the veteran dramatist and painter, who was now contending against ill-health as well as poverty. They decided upon a theatrical benefit, which should also serve as evidence of their appreciation of his long devotion to letters and art. A committee of one hundred prominent men, including Paulding and Bryant, arranged a performance for February 28 at the Park Theatre. The leading players of New York were enlisted, and in addition Charles and Fanny Kemble, who were then visiting this country, and Edwin Forrest, who came from Philadelphia for the occasion. The principal actors contributed their services, the entire Bowery company was offered unsolicited, and Charles Kemble, who was to receive $400 for himself and his daughter, turned over the whole sum to Dunlap.

The program consisted of "Venice Preserved" with Forrest and Kemble in the major parts, a poetical address, several solos, vocal and instrumental, and Dunlap's farce, "Bonaparte in England." Halleck and Bryant in turn had been asked to write the poetical address, but both, while expressing the highest regard for Dunlap, declined because of the press of other duties. George P. Morris then accepted the responsibility and wrote a graceful composition, of which I quote a part:

"What gay assemblage greets my wondering sight!
What scenes of splendor—conjured here to-night!
What voices murmur, and what glances gleam!
Sure 'tis some flattering, unsubstantial dream.
The house is crowded—everybody's here
For beauty famous, or to science dear;
Doctors and lawyers, judges, belles and beaux,
Poets and painters—and heaven only knows
Whom else beside—and, see, gay ladies sit,
Lighting with smiles that fearful place, the pit—
(A fairy change—ah, pray continue it.)
Gray heads are here too, listening to my rhymes,
Full of the spirit of departed times;
Grave men and studious, strangers to my sight,
All gather round me on this brilliant night.
And welcome are ye all. Not now ye come
To speak some trembling poet's awful doom;
With frowning eyes a 'want of mind' to trace
In some new actor's inexperienced face,
Or e'en us old ones (oh, for shame!) to rate
'With study good—in time—but—never great.'
. . . . . .
A nobler motive fills your bosoms now,
To wreathe the laurel round the silver'd brow
Of one who merits it—if any can,
The artist, author, and the honest man.
With equal charms his pen and pencil drew
Rich scenes, to nature and to virtue true.
Full oft upon these boards hath youth appear'd,
And oft these smiles his faltering footsteps cheer'd;
But not alone on budding genius smile,

Leaving the ripen'd sheaf unown'd the while;
To boyish hope not every bounty give,
And only youth and beauty bid to live.
Will you forget the services long past,
Turn the old war-horse out to die at last?
When, his proud strength and noble fleetness o'er,
His faithful bosom dares the charge no more?
Ah, no—the sun that loves his beams to shed
Round every opening flow'ret's tender head,
With smiles as kind his genial radiance throws
To cheer the sadness of the fading rose:
Thus he, whose merit claims this dazzling crowd,
Points to the past, and has his claims allowed;
Looks brightly forth, his faithful journey done,
And rests in triumph—like the setting sun."

A large audience, not unlike that described by Morris, attended in spite of a severe snow-storm. The admission was $3 to the boxes and pit (the latter was arranged for the accommodation of ladies), and $1 to the gallery. The total receipts were $3194.50, and after deducting expenses the committee handed Dunlap $2517.54. The letter of notification read as follows:

New York, March 5, 1833.

Dear Sir,

It has become my pleasing duty, as chairman of the committee appointed by the citizens of New York, who were convened to express their deep sense of the services rendered by you to the promotion of the Fine Arts, and to the dramatic lit-

erature of our country, to inform you, that a benefit has been appropriated, in which many of your fellow citizens have had an opportunity of expressing their estimate of those services, and of bearing their testimony to your character as a private citizen: for the proceeds I refer you to the Hon. William T. McCoun, the treasurer. Allow me, in the name of the committee, to congratulate you upon the success that has attended their efforts, and to add their fervent wishes that the evening of your life may be as happy, as the former part of it has been usefully and honorably employed, in the advancement of the cause of virtue and of literature.

Accept, dear sir, the expression of my personal regard and respect.

DAVID HOSACK, *Chairman.*

To William Dunlap, Esq.

Dunlap's reply was this:

New York, March 5, 1833.

Dear Sir,

It is with great pleasure I acknowledge the receipt of your letter of this morning, from the hands of my meritorious young friend, William Sidney McCoun.

Of the many gratifying testimonials connected with the event you allude to which I have received, evincing the good opinion of my fellow citizens, none will be valued more highly by me than the approbation of my conduct through life, mani-

fested by the large and highly respectable committee appointed by the citizens of New York, who were convened to express their appreciation of the services I had rendered to the fine arts and dramatic literature of our country.

I must beg you, sir, to find language wherewith to communicate my heartfelt thanks for the honor the committee have done me. I cannot find words to express my sense of the feeling shown towards me. For yourself, dear sir, accept my thanks and best wishes for your future welfare.

WILLIAM DUNLAP.

Dr. David Hosack, *Chairman.*[32]

III

The last accessible volume of the Diary extends from June 27, 1833, to December 31, 1834, and gives much information concerning Dunlap's labors and tribulations at this time. We find him this spring and summer working on the "History of the Arts of Design," a book which his friends at the National Academy had urged him to write as a financial aid.[33] He was also preparing some biographies for Herring and Longacre's "National Portrait Gallery." A novel, "Memoirs of a Water Drinker," had just been completed, and was awaiting the pleasure of the publisher. His brush was not yet laid aside, for in August he began two

[32] "New York Evening Post," February 23 to March 9, 1833; "Knickerbocker Magazine," Vol. I, pp. 323 ff.

[33] Cummings, p. 131.

portraits, but no doubt his orders were infrequent. In all his work he was hindered by severe suffering from an ailment which his physician pronounced bladder trouble.

On September 10, the Diary received this significant entry: "In Bank left $36.41. I always find myself poorer on settling my Bank acct than I had previously supposed." On the 26th, his account had sunk to $6.41.

Yet in spite of his several occupations, and his financial and bodily distress, Dunlap found time and energy to serve actively on the committee for the benefit of T. A. Cooper, who had fallen on evil days, and to attempt the study of Greek under the guidance of his son.[34] In September he recorded: "Even now I have my alphabet & enjoy the opening of another avenue to knowledge although I may have time to enter but a little way."[35]

As the year lengthened, his suffering became so acute that he often resorted to laudanum to deaden the pain, taking sometimes as much as seventy-five drops. A good part of December was spent in bed. Yet the art history continued to progress; he constantly received biographical sketches and

[34] By this time John A. Dunlap had become a promising New York attorney. He entered the practice in 1813. In 1815 he published a large digest of the law relating to the justices of the peace, and in 1821 or 1822 another large book on the Supreme Court of New York. See New York Directories, 1813–14; "Analectic Magazine," Vol. VI, p. 419; "Literary and Scientific Repository," Vol. IV, p. 40.

[35] Diary, Vol. XXX, p. 41.

other information concerning artists whom he wished to include, and when able he worked at his manuscript.

Early in 1834 the physicians diagnosed his disease as gall-stones, and recommended an operation. "The remedy for this disease," Dunlap wrote, "has always appeared to me dreadful—but submission to my duty I hope may bear me through & a few years of comparative health may reward. 'Thy will be done.' "[36] The operation was performed on the 26th of February under the direction of Drs. Francis and McLean. It was unusually severe. The patient was under the knife for more than an hour. When one considers that anæsthetics were not yet in use, one is not surprised that the memory of the ordeal haunted him like a nightmare for months.

During the convalescence, his wife and daughter acted as nurses, and on them he bestowed more praise for his recovery than on the doctors. "I have had, and have, many blessings," he declared, "but those flowing from my family are the most precious."[37] His strength returned slowly, but as soon as he could sit up for a few hours he resumed work on his book. By April he was able to walk out a little, though it was not until fall that he left off the use of laudanum.

On the 5th of December the "Arts of Design," published in two volumes by Scott & Company, was placed on sale and copies were sent to the sub-

[36] Diary, Vol. XXX, p. 65.
[37] "Arts of Design," Vol. I, p. 308.

scribers.[38] The subscription was surprisingly national in scope; among the points at which sets had been ordered were Key West, New Orleans, Savannah, Charleston, Norfolk, Philadelphia, Albany, New Haven, and Boston, as well as New York. The author realized some profit from his labor, though not enough to mitigate his poverty for any length of time.

From this thirtieth volume of the Diary may be gained some interesting glimpses of Dunlap's companions. Washington Irving was a good friend who occasionally dropped in to spend an evening. On his return from abroad he expressed the conviction that democracy was the best system of government. After seventeen years of foreign residence he was astonished, he said, at the contrast between our cheerfulness and ambition, and the discontent and anxiety which pervaded Europe. All which, Dunlap replied, he had known long ago. A closer friend was J. Fenimore Cooper, who had the habit of calling several times a week, and during the period of the operation was especially attentive. The convalescent must have been greatly cheered and diverted by the visits of this virile and whole-souled man. On April 13 he wrote: "J. F. Cooper with me about an hour almost wild with politics"; and on December 21: "J. F. Cooper calls and stays till 2 oclock full of politics and anticipations of evil."

As usual, Dunlap was reading widely at this

[38] The edition comprised one thousand sets, and sold to subscribers at $5 a set.

time. Among his authors were Mrs. Shelley, Boswell, Cooper, Walpole, Gibbon, Bulwer, Edgeworth, Defoe, Hugo, Molière, and Pepys.

For the remaining years of his life very little information can be obtained. He continued to act as vice-president of the National and in various ways served the Academy. He seems practically to have ceased painting about 1836. Literary enterprises occupied his last three or four years. "Thirty Years Ago; or, The Memoirs of a Water Drinker," which had existed as a manuscript in 1833, was published by Bancroft & Holley in two volumes in the summer of 1836, and reprinted in a cheap one-volume edition in 1837, indicating that it met a ready welcome with the temperance societies to which it was dedicated.

Dunlap's old age, like his whole life, was full of activity. Necessity was the immediate incentive; yet affluence would not have checked his efforts, for he had the habit of labor and took joy in his work. But his last years were saddened by the loss of his daughter Margaret, who died on June 9, 1837.[39]

This final period was devoted to investigation in the history of New York. At the age of sixty-nine or seventy Dunlap had conceived the ambition of writing the history of his city and State, and with his usual energy had set to work examining the records. From lack of funds to carry on the undertaking, he decided to publish a preliminary text-book from the material he had so far

[39] Dunlap family Bible.

obtained.[40] In the spring of 1837 appeared his "History of New York, for Schools" in two small volumes from the press of Collins, Keese & Company.

Dunlap was reëlected vice-president of the National Academy in 1838, as he had been annually since 1831. This year, however, he declined the honor on account of ill-health. Upon his retiring, the Academy asked him to sit to Ingham for his portrait, and a likeness was produced which was pronounced faithful in the extreme,[41] and which still hangs on the walls of the National Academy of Design. During the twelve years of the institution's existence, he had been one of the most active in promoting its interests. Not only had he held various offices and served on numerous committees, but in his "Arts of Design" he had been its first annalist. Furthermore, he had been a regular contributor to the yearly exhibitions. His contributions were mostly portraits, but biblical pictures, illustrations of fiction, and allegorical subjects were also among them.[42]

[40] "American Monthly Magazine," Vol. X, p. 85.

[41] Cummings, p. 151.

[42] The following is a list of Dunlap's contributions to the annual exhibitions:—1826: five portraits; three groups for "Calvary"; "Barabbas and Thieves"—sketch from West; scene from the "Spy"; "Cupid Sleeping"—copy from Mignard; group of female figures. 1827: five portraits, including General P. B. Porter, Governor Clinton, Anthony Bleecker, and the artist; a group for "Death on the Pale Horse"; a group for "Calvary"; "Female and Sleeping Cupid"—Cupid from Guido; "Saviour and Mary Magdalen in the Garden." 1828: nine portraits, including Hackett telling the story of *Uncle Ben;* two studies for

Of Dunlap's merits as a painter it is difficult to speak because so much of his work is either inaccessible or non-extant. But students of the subject award him only a humble place in American art. Deficient in training and handicapped by the loss of an eye, he was ill-equipped for unusual achievements. He painted to keep the wolf from the door, and he wisely did the types of work that were most in demand,—miniatures, oil portraits, and show pieces. In his historical paintings he was a consistent imitator. Lacking creative imagination, he relied on West for subject-matter and method. It is interesting to note that the modest success of these pictures resulted in large part from this imitation,—such was the dependence of the early United States on the culture of England. As disseminators of culture through the

"Calvary." 1829: eleven portraits, including J. F. Cooper; "Clio"; "Counting Chickens"; the "Historic Muse" (pronounced a graceful, well-drawn figure,—Sully considered it his best painting). 1830: nine portraits; "Calvary" (no doubt the small preliminary sketch). 1831: twelve portraits, including the artist (said to be "one of the best heads ever painted in this country," perhaps the one shown in 1827); "Calvary"; the "Detection of Harry Wharton," from the "Spy"; a study for "Christ Rejected"; "Counting Chickens"; "Clio"; two studies for "Calvary"; "Little Girl Coming from School." 1832: seven portraits; "Holy Family." 1833: two portraits; "Artist Showing Picture to his Parents," painted in 1788. 1834: no entries on account of sickness. 1835: two portraits, including G. P. Morris; "Richard and Kenneth," from Scott's "Talisman." 1836: group of children. 1837: no entries. 1838: crayon portrait of Washington, made in 1783. For data see Catalogues of the exhibitions of the National Academy of Design; "New York Mirror," Vol. VI, p. 354; Vol. X, p. 266; "Arts of Design," Vol. I, p. 305.

less advanced sections of the country, they performed a not unimportant service. Bryant said: "We cannot call him eminent either as a writer or as an artist, but he did much by his large historical paintings, exhibited by his pupils all over the country, to give our people an idea of what a picture ought to be, and to awaken in them a taste for art."[43] Yet no doubt these pictures had a certain effectiveness in themselves; for, according to a contemporary critic, "In these he has studied a free, bold manner, which, disregarding, and sometimes perhaps in too great a degree, the niceties of detail, aims at producing a strong general effect."[44]

But Dunlap's forte was portraiture, a branch of art in which he deserves higher rank than is commonly given him. We have found his ability as a miniaturist to be considerable. And some of his oils are well above mediocrity,—a fact which students of American art often overlook. Among his best extant portraits are those of a Lady, De Witt Clinton, John A. Conant, Mrs. Thomas A. Cooper, and George Spalding. Perhaps the most distinctive quality of all these is their humanness. The last two, which have recently come to light, give evidence of unexpected talent. The faces are beautifully drawn and are full of character, the colors are rich and soft, and the whole impression is thoroughly artistic. The following

[43] "The Academy of Design," an address at the opening of the new building in 1865.
[44] "New York Mirror," Vol. X, p. 266.

paragraphs are taken from the "Bulletin of the Worcester Art Museum" of January, 1917:

"The Museum has lately acquired two examples of his oil portraits which in general excellence will come as a surprise even to those familiar with the best work of the early American school. One, the Portrait of a Lady, has much dignity and charm. The genial face in its quaint setting of dark curls and cap of creamy lace, the easy pose against a dark crimson curtain drawn back from an open window, and the harmonious color seen in the saffron gown and paler yellow ribbons, all combine to make a picture comparable to the work of Thomas Sully at his best.

"The other, a Portrait of George Spalding, is of still finer quality. The young man . . . wears a dark coat, with the stock and ruff of the early nineteenth century. The smooth-shaven face and the fashion of the curling hair, drawn forward over forehead and cheeks, betoken the same period. In technique this portrait might well be taken for an excellent example of Dunlap's contemporary, Gilbert Stuart, and it is of special interest in being a first-rate piece of work by an early American artist who has hitherto been almost unknown."

Desiring to show their appreciation of his zeal for the cause and to aid in forwarding the "History of New York," Dunlap's fellow artists arranged a picture exhibit for his benefit. The committee comprised Verplanck, Bryant, Morris, Francis, and several leading painters. Between

two hundred and two hundred and fifty pictures, chiefly modern, were collected and placed in the Stuyvesant Institute. The display began on November 19, 1838, to run four weeks; the admission was twenty-five cents. Among the painters represented were Cole, Durand, Morse, Weir, Jarvis, Dunlap, Inman, Ingham, Reynolds, West, Stuart, Allston, Sully, Copley, and Trumbull. The newspapers urged attendance. The "Mirror," always very cordial to Dunlap, declared that such a benefit was really a public duty because of his long services and his present misfortunes. That periodical asserted that "another such opportunity of witnessing in one *coup-d'œil* the *chef-d'œuvres* of many of our first artists will not soon be presented." None the less, at the end of a month only about $200 had been cleared, and it was decided to continue the exhibition a few weeks longer. It closed on January 5, 1839, with a balance of about $1000, which was presented to Dunlap.[45]

He was thus enabled to proceed to the publication of his work, but while the first volume was in the press he was stricken with paralysis. Though for a time he had sufficient strength to correct proof, yet finally the pen dropped from his powerless hand. His purpose, however, was not defeated, for through the efforts of others the first volume of the "History of the New Netherlands, Province of New York, and State of New York,

[45] "New York Evening Post," November 17, 1838, and following issues; Catalogue of the Exhibit; "New York Mirror," Vol. XVI, pp. 175, 215, 231.

to the Adoption of the Federal Constitution," came from the press of Carter & Thorp about the middle of September, and the second volume a few months later.[46]

On the morning of September 28, 1839, William Dunlap died at his home in Greenwich Lane. He was survived by his wife and son. His body was taken to Perth Amboy for burial.

Until his last illness his mind remained clear and vigorous. His acquaintances found his memory "a vast store-house of facts and anecdotes."[47] Indeed, it would be difficult to name a contemporary who had gone through a wider range of experience or known more interesting and important people than he, and not without reason was he considered one of the most attractive conversationalists to be met with.

Dunlap's long life of seventy-three and a half years was one of continued devotion to cultural pursuits. He early swore allegiance to art and letters, and through privation and disappointment, in spite of obstacles that would have discouraged most men, he held his allegiance true until the day of his death. He had more than his share of afflictions, but his optimism bore him courageously through. In no sense a genius, he yet won for himself an honorable place in two spheres of cultural activity by dint of perseverance and determination. While deriving no little satisfaction from the distinctions and friendships which were

[46] Preface to Vol. II of the "History of New York."
[47] "Commercial Advertiser," October 2, 1839.

his portion, he was always extremely modest concerning his ability. He carried through life a lofty ideal, and in all he did he strove to serve the highest moral and intellectual welfare of his city and nation.

His contemporaries warmly praised his accomplishments, but especially did they pay tribute to his character as an upright and lovable man. The "Mirror" spoke the common opinion when it said sometime before his death:

"Engaged for so many years in pursuits so various, active and exciting, in which he was not always kindly treated by fortune, and which brought him into conflict with so many interests, it might almost be deemed impossible that Mr. Dunlap should have escaped occasions of slander and enmity. Yet, few men have passed through life so free from reproach, and few are so universally beloved. Mr. Dunlap, by general consent, bears that noblest of titles—an honest man. His manners are unassuming and kind; his conversation full of knowledge and anecdote; his moral judgment true and delicate; and his feelings warm and generous."[48]

[48] "New York Mirror," Vol. X, p. 266.

CHAPTER III

The Original Plays

I

WILLIAM DUNLAP has been called the Father of American Drama. How far he deserves this ascription of paternity can be decided only by first considering the status of dramatic literature in this country prior to his advent.

The early colonists had little leisure and less inclination for theatrical frivolity. But by 1714 a play had been written and printed on colonial soil,—"Androborus," a political farce by Robert Hunter, Governor of New York. The real inception of native drama, however, did not occur until the stage presentation of English plays had become an established fact. This situation was attendant upon the arrival of the Hallam Company in 1752.[1]

Stimulated by the frequent performance of "Richard III," "Romeo and Juliet," "George Barnwell," "Cato," "The Beaux' Stratagem," and other masterpieces of the British theatre, a few of our more adventurous writers began uncertainly to essay the dramatic. First in ability as well as in time among these pioneers was Thomas Godfrey of Philadelphia. In 1759, at the age of twenty-three, he wrote a tragedy called "The Prince of

[1] See *ante*, p. 32.

Parthia," which was acted in 1767.[2] It is not a very excellent tragedy; indeed, a modern reader would find its most tragic passages humorous. Yet considering its author's youth and the circumstances under which he worked, it is surprisingly good, and American drama might easily have had a less dignified beginning.

"The Prince of Parthia" was unmistakably constructed according to the pseudo-classic conventions which were prominently employed in England during the eighteenth century. It is akin to Addison's "Cato," Thomson's "Sophonisba," Johnson's "Irene," and other blank verse tragedies involving classic or oriental settings, the three unities, and stiffly formal treatment. In fact, Godfrey's play bears a general resemblance to Lee's "Theodosius," one of the early representatives of the type. It also contains some Shakespearian reminiscences. The influence of "Romeo and Juliet" may be traced in the death of the lovers, and an echo of "Julius Cæsar" can be detected in the supernatural portents which prelude the catastrophe. "The Prince of Parthia" thus announced distinctly that American drama in its inception was to be no independent growth, but an offshoot of the English plant.

The next two plays were written by men unacquainted with dramatic literature, and reveal the extent to which our writers were capable of going when not copying definite models. "Ponteach" (1766), a tragedy of Indian life, was the work of

[2] Seilhamer, "History of the American Theatre," Vol. I, p. 189.

Major Robert Rogers, a frontiersman and Indian fighter. Somewhat to our astonishment, the redskins are shown to be more sinned against than sinning. We see them victimized by the white man's rapacity and deception, against which their only defense is the tomahawk. "Ponteach" is important as our first play to deal with American material, but it does so in an exceedingly crude and formless way.

"The Conquest of Canada; or, The Siege of Quebec" (1766), by George Cockings, is even worse; nevertheless it appeared on the Philadelphia stage in the season of 1772–3.[3] Utterly devoid of plot or structure, it is simply a chronicle of the battle in which the author has tried to include every detail. The poverty of the Colonial theatre in the matter of mechanics is suggested by a scene in Act III. The nocturnal expedition of the French fire-ships against the British fleet is to be illustrated. The stage is darkened, and not a person appears. The desired effect is produced by much yelling and bawling of orders behind the scenes. The next morning we are carried to a near-by nunnery, where the sisters dilate over the horrors of the past night. Humble, indeed, were the beginnings of American drama.

In 1767 comedy began unpropitiously with "The Disappointment; or, The Force of Credulity," by Andrew Barton.[4] This wretched farce, which satirizes the then prevalent practice of searching

[3] Seilhamer, Vol. I, p. 302.

[4] Perhaps an assumed name for Colonel Thomas Forrest of Germantown. The play was to appear at the South-

for buried pirate treasure, concerns itself with the scheme of several tricksters, who bury a chest of bricks and inveigle a group of gulls to dig it up in their quest for gold. Containing as it does some twenty songs, "The Disappointment" had the further honor of initiating American ballad-opera.[5] The type grew up in imitation of the English species, which had been brought to a high pitch of popularity in both countries by "The Beggar's Opera" (1728) and its followers.

The Revolutionary War with its preliminary events called out a few plays in defense of each party, all of them feeble from the dramatic standpoint. To Mrs. Mercy Warren, daughter and sister of the Otises and wife of General Warren, have been attributed four scathing satires against the British. The first of these, "The Adulateur" (1773), is perhaps the most interesting. It is composed in inflated blank verse, and represents the Adamses, Hancock, Warren, and other patriots under the guise of the Roman conspirators: Brutus, Cassius, Marcus, Portius, etc.[6]

wark Theatre, Philadelphia, but was withdrawn just before its presentation because of personal reflections contained in it. See Seilhamer, Vol. I, pp. 177–8.

[5] The term ballad-opera properly applies only to plays like "The Beggar's Opera," the lyrics of which were set to popular airs; but it is commonly used to designate also those plays containing songs with original music. For discussion of the type see O. G. Sonneck's "Early Opera in America."

[6] See P. L. Ford, "Some Notes toward an Essay on the Beginnings of American Dramatic Literature," New York, 1893, pp. 15–16; M. C. Tyler, "Literary History of the American Revolution," New York and London, 1897, Vol. II, pp. 193–4.

The only other playwright of any importance whose name has emerged from this period was Hugh Henry Brackenridge. His two tragedies, "The Battle of Bunker's-Hill" (1776) and "The Death of Montgomery in Storming the City of Quebec" (1777), are of a highly rhetorical nature. The action is as slight as may be, but the deficiency is supplied by a succession of bombastic blank verse speeches. The former drama is a eulogy of American bravery. The latter is a violent denunciation of British brutality and treachery. Even the ghost of Wolfe arises to condemn his countrymen and to prophesy the future glories of the United States in an oration of fifty-six lines.

The English cause had champions equally rabid. Nothing could exceed the scurrility of the anonymous "Battle of Brooklyn" (1776). The American people are represented as stupid cowards and their leaders, Washington in particular, as degenerate scoundrels.

It is needless to say that the plays of the Revolution did not advance our dramatic literature. The writers were too much engrossed in the delights of reviling the enemy to pay much attention to more artistic considerations.

A better composition than any since "The Prince of Parthia" was Peter Markoe's "Patriot Chief" (1784), though its excellences are but few. It is another so-called tragedy in the formal style then in vogue.

The first American comedy worthy of the name was "The Contrast," by Royall Tyler, which was acted four times at New York in 1787, with sub-

sequent performances at Philadelphia and elsewhere.[7] It contains a well-defined and skilfully managed plot of considerable interest. The play contrasts the affected, Europeanized American with the sincere and sterling home-bred citizen.

Royall Tyler's distinct contribution to our drama was a new humorous character, the Yankee. His *Jonathan* was the progenitor of a long and honorable line of stage Yankees, commonly glorying in the baptismal name of their ancestor, and all inheriting his ignorance and gawkiness, his shrewdness and honesty, his dialect and "darnations." Dialect had occasionally been employed before in American plays, "The Disappointment" for instance, but Tyler's *Jonathan* was the first attempt to create humor by exploiting provincialism.

For our purpose "The Contrast" is noteworthy primarily as the earliest sentimental play to be written in this country. As such it was the shower which preceded the deluge. Tyler's model, of course, was the emotional comedy of England, which had been so conspicuous on the British stage throughout the century, and which had also gained a large following in the New World. The purpose of English sentimental comedy was twofold: to correct morals and to arouse the feelings to a high pitch of activity. The former aim was generally accomplished by the reformation of a rake, as in Cibber's "Careless Husband" (1704) and Kelly's "School for Wives" (1773); the latter by the reuniting of long-lost brothers and sisters, or par-

[7] Seilhamer, Vol. II, index.

ents and children, and by the distress and final happiness of lovers, as in Steele's "Conscious Lovers" (1722), Whitehead's "School for Lovers" (1762), and Cumberland's "Natural Son" (1784). Sentimentalism developed a code of conduct all its own. The true sentimentalist was required to approach each circumstance of life through the heart, not the head. A poor man should be given a fortune instead of a job. Tears must be always ready to flow at any sign of distress. Parents, no matter how unreasonable, should be respected and obeyed. A lady should so guard her every act that no shade of indelicacy might darken her fair name. She should cultivate the art of fainting gracefully. A gentleman must be ever ready to forgive injury, and to throw away his sword when an enemy is in his power,—such magnanimity is the surest safeguard of honor. Lovers must show the most disinterested regard for each other's sense of delicacy. They may spout sentiments profusely, but they should never display spontaneous emotion.[8]

Apparently Tyler studied diligently in the English school of sensibility, for "The Contrast" is entirely orthodox. There is a rascal of the name of *Dimple* who must be exposed. There is a hero, *Col. Manly,* and a heroine, *Maria,* whose happiness is balked for a time by a headstrong father. The lovers are as thorough a pair of sentimentalists as writer ever invented. Their sense of delicacy is

[8] For a complete discussion of English sentimental drama see Ernest Bernbaum, "Drama of Sensibility," Boston, 1915.

awe-inspiring. Ridiculed by their gay and thoughtless acquaintance, they pursue unperturbed the path of solemn rectitude which leadeth unto matrimony. The curtain descends on the triumph of sentimentality and the discomfiture of the frivolous and still unmated scoffers.

As Dunlap began to write, a few other plays of the prevailing types were coming from the press. In 1789 Samuel Low published "The Politician Outwitted," a comedy of a somewhat sentimental nature, containing a rustic character imitated from *Jonathan*. In 1790 were printed two tragedies, "The Ladies of Castile" and "The Sack of Rome," written by Mrs. Mercy Warren in the conventional manner.

It can readily be seen that a playwright entering the field about 1790 would gain very little aid from the productions of his American precursors. The body of native drama was small (the majority of the plays have been cited above) and of quite negligible quality. Except that comedy should be realistic and more or less satirical, and tragedy vaguely classical in the eighteenth century sense, there were no traditions. But as a matter of fact Dunlap did not much bother himself about his predecessors. He was probably unaware of their existence, with the exception of Tyler. For his inspiration he went directly to England just as his forerunners had done.

II

William Dunlap's first dramatic offspring has long slumbered in an unmarked grave. "The Modest Soldier; or, Love in New York" (1787) is known to us only through the author's slight sketch of it in his "History of the American Theatre": "A Yankee servant, a travelled American, an officer in the late revolutionary army, a fop, such as fops then were in New-York, an old gentleman and his two daughters, one of course lively and the other serious, formed the dramatis personæ."[9] Written under the spell of the contemporary English stage, with which Dunlap had become familiar during his recent sojourn abroad, and directly prompted by "The Contrast,"[10] "The Modest Soldier" was undoubtedly a comedy of sentiment. It is safe to conjecture that the Yankee servant was a second *Jonathan,* that the modest soldier was a brother of *Col. Manly,* that the fop was of the tribe of *Dimple,* and that the serious daughter was as hopeless a sentimentalist as *Maria.*

With his second attempt Dunlap graduated into the meagre ranks of the successful American playwrights. As our author's first acted play, "The Father; or, American Shandyism" (written 1788) is perhaps of sufficient interest to warrant a de-

[9] p. 77.
[10] See *ante,* p. 14.

tailed synopsis, which may give some notion of his ability at dramatic construction.

There is a prologue in praise of the moral stage of the New World.

Scene: New York City.

Act I. *Mr. Racket,* after a year of matrimony, has grown indifferent toward his wife, and spends his time in gambling and dissipation. Resolving to cure him by jealousy, *Mrs. Racket* affects a great regard for *Capt. Ranter,* an English libertine.

Act II. *Mrs. Racket's* uncle, *Col. Duncan,* and his servant, *Cartridge,* plan to construct a mimic fort in *Mrs. Racket's* tulip garden, for which *Cartridge* is devising a pair of guns from the *Colonel's* old boots. *Duncan* and *Cartridge* are very much devoted to each other and benevolent toward all the world. They are full of sympathy for the charitable *Caroline, Mrs. Racket's* sister, who is wasting away from secret grief.

Act III. *Caroline,* sola, laments the probable death of her fiancé, *Henry.* Enter *Col. Duncan,* who reveals to her his history—the old story of a secret marriage, and an infant son entrusted to a friend. The son was reported killed at Bunker Hill. *Caroline* in turn confesses her love for *Henry,* and describes a ring he wore, which the *Colonel* recognizes as one he had given his son. *Ranter* enters, displays the ring under discussion, and declares that *Henry* in dying gave it to him.

Act IV. *Henry* appears, disguised as a blind soldier, in pursuit of his servant *Marsh,* alias *Ranter,* who has stolen his ring. The blind soldier

assures them that *Henry* is alive; *Ranter* swears he saw him die. *Caroline,* alternately exalted by hope and crushed by despair, finds ample occasion for fainting and tears.

Act V. Scene: A dark hallway. *Racket* attempts to seduce the maid *Susannah.* Enter *Ranter* with *Mrs. Racket,* whose virtue he is assailing. At sounds of violence *Duncan* and *Cartridge* rush in. In the confusion *Mrs. Racket* gets into the arms of her husband, and a reconciliation follows. *Henry* now appears without disguise and, his identity established, falls into the arms of his father, *Col. Duncan.*

The epilogue ridicules the play, and protests that the author should not be encouraged.

The humor is entrusted mainly to *Dr. Quiescent,* an unbalanced physician, who obtained his degree at Edinburgh by a thesis on recovering drowned kittens. He is an "impenetrable coxcomb" to whom every occurrence is a reminder of some remarkable case he has attended.

The reason for the sub-title, "American Shandyism," is apparent from the above summary. *Col. Duncan* is a close copy of Sterne's *Uncle Toby Shandy,* and *Cartridge* of his *Corporal Trim.* The *Colonel* rides *Uncle Toby's* hobby, mimic warfare, he has a potential *Widow Wadman* in *Mrs. Grenade,* and he is as all-embracingly benevolent as his prototype. *Cartridge* says of him:

"I have known him brush away the mosquito that bit him with his handkerchief, thus: 'I can

forgive thee,' says he; 'thou actest up to thy nature.' . . . He will not let anybody, that has to do with him, kill any toads and such things, . . . he saves from sorrow all that fall in his way—the man as well as the insect."[11]

But *Duncan* is only a formal imitation of the immortal *Uncle Toby;* whatever charm he possesses is reflected, for he lacks the breath of life.

It is needless to dwell on the fact that "The Father" is a thorough-going sentimental comedy. It could hardly have been anything else. Not only was the whole tendency of contemporary literature in that direction, but Dunlap was by nature susceptible to sentimentalism, being a moralist and a humanitarian. The main plot is of the lost-relative-found type, and involves the distressed-lover theme. The sub-plot is a reformed-rake episode. The dark-hall affair in the last act may have been suggested, as Genest has pointed out,[12] by Garrick's "Bon Ton; or, High Life Above Stairs" (1775), in which two guilty couples meet in a dark room, the husband by mistake taking possession of his wife. The intervention of a moral uncle heightens the resemblance.

As the second play of a youth of twenty-two, "The Father" is distinctly commendable. Without much claim to originality, it shows that ability to discover public taste which is one of the essentials

[11] Act III.

[12] "Some Account of the English Stage from the Restoration in 1660 to 1830," London, Vol. X, p. 197.

of theatrical success. To be sure it is overcrowded with incident, and contains several scenes and figures which do not forward the action, yet it is brisk and entertaining, it is managed with discretion, and it should have gone well on the stage. The "American Quarterly Review" of 1827 pronounced it one of our best plays. "The plot," it declared, "is sufficiently dramatic to carry an interest throughout; the characters are well drawn, and well employed; and the dialogue possesses, what is indispensable to genuine comedy, a brief terseness, and unstudied ease, which few of the productions of the present era afford."[13] Genest said: "This is so good a comedy, that one is surprised, that it should not have been brought out on the English stage."[14]

The edition of 1806 made considerable alteration in the play, which was now called "The Father of an Only Child." The changes in the main were for the better. Some of the early crudity was removed, the style was more highly finished, and certain scenes and characters were more completely developed. The *Doctor* was made more of, his amusing attempt to resuscitate a bundle of old clothes being added. The second edition was lengthened by about two thousand words, and was further altered by a rechristening of several characters,—for instance, *Duncan* became *Campbell, Cartridge* became *Platoon, Ranter* became *Rushport,* and *Dr. Quiescent* became *Dr. Terebrate*

[13] Vol. I, p. 350.
[14] Vol. X, p. 196.

Tattle. The increased moralizing tendency of this edition suggests that Dunlap's managerial experience had convinced him of the potency of the theatre as a social influence.

"Darby's Return," the interlude which the young playwright composed in 1789 for Wignell's benefit, drew all its characters from O'Keeffe's "Poor Soldier," in which the comedian was a favorite as *Darby*. Dunlap imagined the mischief-maker to have returned to Ireland from his wanderings, and to be relating his experiences to his old friends. The first adventure—his involuntary voyage to Dantzic—and his career as a Prussian soldier were taken from O'Keeffe's "Patrick in Prussia; or, Love in a Camp," a sequel to "The Poor Soldier." Leaving Germany, *Darby* eventually reached America, a country which won his heart, as he tells the admiring throng. From the United States he made a flying trip to France and thence home.

The author admitted in the preface that the piece was a hasty and incorrect sketch, which he had no idea of printing until urged to do so by friends. It has, none the less, a few points of interest. Dunlap was affiliated with the Federalist party, and the passage on France reflects the unsympathetic attitude of the Federalists toward the French Revolution:

"I went to France. I always did love quiet,
And there I got in the middle of a riot.
There they cried, *'vive la nation,' 'liberty,'*

And all the *bag and tails* swore they'd be free;
They caught the fire quite across the ocean,
And to be sure they're in a nice commotion:
'Down with the bastille, tuck up the jailor,
Cut off *mi lor's* head, then pay his taylor.'

. . . . . .

Some took the *liberty* to plunder others,

. . . . . .

You may be sure I didn't stay there long."

Further, "Darby's Return" is interesting as the first American ballad-opera to face the footlights. Though a brief affair of nine pages, it is a true ballad-opera because its two songs are set to popular airs.

The promise of worthy achievement held out in "The Father" was not belied in Dunlap's first tragedy, "The Fatal Deception; or, The Progress of Guilt" (written 1790), which was printed as "Leicester." The story is sufficiently exciting if somewhat extravagant.

Act I. *Lord Leicester* is approaching Kenilworth after a considerable absence at war, eager to rejoin his bride, *Matilda*. He comes upon *Dudley Cecil* defending himself and his wife against a band of assailants. *Leicester* rescues them, and persuades them to accompany him to his castle.

Act II. *Matilda* is living in adultery with *Henry Cecil*, whom she has installed in the household as her brother. She wishes to flee with him, but her husband's unexpected arrival prevents.

Matilda learns that her real brother is on his way to Kenilworth. Realizing that her deception will be disclosed, she convinces *Henry* that he must kill *Leicester.*

Act III. *Leicester* takes *Dudley Cecil* to his own room to rest. *Matilda* and *Henry* approach the chamber. After a passionate struggle, he enters the darkened room and stabs the sleeper.

Act IV. *Leicester* learns of the infidelity of *Matilda* and *Henry,* and vows vengeance. When *Henry* meets *Leicester* his consternation is great, but it gives place to anguish when he discovers that his victim was his own brother.

Act V. *Matilda* attempts to poison *Leicester,* but he wards off the danger. Thereupon she stabs herself in his presence. *Henry* now enters as though to engage in combat, but instead runs on his opponent's sword and dies.

In the preface Dunlap said:

"To most readers, Matilda urging Henry to the murder of Leicester will appear as a copy of Lady Macbeth; but she is, in reality, more in situation like the Clytemnestra of the Greek poets: yet essentially different (independent of difference in merit) from both."

The Shakespearian debt thus hinted at is considerable. As in "Macbeth," so here the guilty pair plan the destruction of an innocent sleeper. *Henry's* hesitation, *Matilda's* incitement, and his remorse are of Shakespearian origin. After the deed, *Matilda* exclaims:

"Henry, go wash thy hands
And shift thy clothes, perchance some blood is
on them?"

Henry replies:

"Will water wash these clean?"[15]

—a close parallel to the dialogue in "Macbeth," Act II, Scene II. Shakespeare's banquet scene is strongly suggested in Act IV. When *Leicester* is first seen after the murder, *Henry* is in a frenzy. *Matilda* tries to be calm, assuring her husband that *Henry* is unwell.

The obligation to the "Agamemnon" of Æschylus is equally obvious. Both *Clytemnestra* and *Matilda* conceive a profound hatred for their husbands because of past offenses. Both women live in adultery while their husbands are absent at war, and slay them on their return.

"Leicester" obeys implicitly the three unities, yet in its medieval setting and in the freedom of its action it marks something of a break from the tradition which had dominated American drama since its inception. "The Prince of Parthia," "The Battle of Bunker's-Hill," "The Death of Montgomery," "The Patriot Chief," "The Sack of Rome," and "The Ladies of Castile" are all examples of the formal eighteenth century species of tragedy. "Leicester" may be classified as a semi-romantic tragedy, the product of many influences, namely: the Elizabethan revenge tragedy, the tragedy of fate, such semi-romantic tragedies as Home's

[15] Act III.

"Douglas" (1757), which was long a favorite here, and the recent Gothic plays.

It is written in a blank verse which is more poetic and more nearly adequate than anything before it in this country. The story is told with considerable skill throughout, and in the murder scene with more intensity and power than can be found previously in American drama. *Matilda* and *Henry* are the most lifelike tragic figures that our writers had yet produced. To be sure, the play is loosely put together, and the action is often unmotivated, yet in force and stage effectiveness "Leicester" was the best native tragedy up to its time. The following scene from Act III is far superior to anything which preceded, and Dunlap himself never surpassed it:

Enter Matilda *and* Henry.

Mat. Softly. I'll steal and listen at the door.

Hen. [*aside*] 'T is a hellish purpose. I ne'er shall do it.

Mat. He's not asleep. Methinks I heard him sigh.

Hen. He dreams of murder.

Mat. Henry, what mean'st thou?
Remember that Matilda's life's at stake,
Nor let thy fancy conjure forms of horror,
To fill thy mind, and turn thee from thy purpose.

Hen. O, no! one image doth possess me all:
A coward, stealing on the hour of sleep,—
Of peaceful sleep,—stabbing the man that loves him.

Mat. O, spare me, Henry! cease such thoughts as these—

Hen. If he must die, to-morrow will I meet him;
Then, as he views his ample fields alone,
Or haply roams, by me alone attended,
I will to single combat challenge him;
Sword meeting sword, on equal terms we'll strive,
And he, or Cecil, fall.

Mat. No; thou canst not
Mean it. Enough! Matilda sees her fate!

. . . . . .

Hen. I will do it; I will no more trouble thee.
I see the dreadful, damn'd necessity
For murder. And now come forth, my unflesh'd sword! [*Draws.*
When my brave father tied thee to my side,
'Twas not for deeds like this. But it must be.
Thou shalt drink noble blood. Angel of death!
Guide thou the point, and let me not strike twice!

Mat. Blood not thy sword; mischief to us may follow.
I have procur'd—a—
[*Hesitates, trembles, and draws forth a concealed weapon.*]

Hen. [*snatching it*] 'Tis well; I thank thee!
Why ay, I thank thee; this doth look like murder.
[*Puts up his sword.*
Is he asleep?

Mat. [*listening*] Softly. I hear no noise.
Hark! he did stir. No, 'twas the passing wind
Did move the window. Tread lightly as thou enter'st.

If he should wake? Alas! I'm wild with horrid
Apprehension. Henry, thou shak'st again.
Hen. Do I? Not much. Fear nothing—wait
thou there—
Pr'ythee let none come near while it is doing.
[*Partly in the room.*
Mat. Why dost thou not go in?
Hen. 'Tis light.
Mat. [*in great terror*] Henry!
Hen. I dare to do, but dare not see it done.
Mat. Ruin.
Hen. O no, Matilda! I cannot do
A deed of darkness in the face of day!
[*Throws down the dagger.*
Mat. I will not urge thee further, Henry Cecil:
If *thou* wouldst give me up, why should I live?
Hen. Nay, nay; but then to see him when
I do it:
Think, think of that; to look upon his face—
Upon the face of him so lov'd, so injur'd;
And plunge yon weapon in the honest heart
Which teems with thoughts to serve me!
[*She covers her face with an action of despair and horror.*]
Look not so.
I'll do it. [*Takes up dagger wildly.*] Do thou but
only shut the light,
And, when his heart beats upward to my hand,
I'll meet it with my dagger.
Mat. Hold thee firm.
But one small window dimly lights the room;
That from within the castle I can reach,
All unperceived.

Hen. [*with the eagerness of despair*] I pr'ythee do it then.

Mat. When I shall knock twice on the window-board,— [*Faultering.*

Then—Henry—then— [*Exit.*

Hen. Yes; I *will* go on;

Repentance and retreat are now denied me;
Hell has ensnar'd—by Heaven I am forsaken.
'Twas not a wayward fancy led me from
My brother's roof, and happy native fields;
Alas! all innocent, was I driven forth
To fate, a lamb-like victim mark'd for destruction,
Doom'd before my birth to horrible perdition!

Dud. [*in the room as in sleep*] O, Cecil!

Hen. Hark!

Dud. O, Cecil! O, my brother!

Hen. Some pitying spirit breaks through Nature's laws,

And, unembodied, forms these solemn sounds
Articulate, to warn me from the deed.
Perhaps Lord Cecil, from this world releas'd,
Yet hovering near, with agonized cries
Would stay my hand, and save my sinking soul.
It is too late. What noise? Sure he has wak'd!
No—I wish he had. He never must wake more!
Again. It was the shutting out the light.
Once, twice; she knocks. Why then prepare thee, Henry.
I shall not knock so gently at thy breast,
O Lei'ster! Now, now to the dark, dark deed.

[*Exit into the chamber.*

As in the case of "Darby's Return," O'Keeffe furnished the suggestion for a return interlude, "Shelty's Travels" (1794), *Shelty* being the scapegoat in the then popular "Highland Reel." Dunlap's piece was not printed, but the following synopsis of it from the "New York Daily Gazette" of April 23, 1794, gives some idea of its contents:

"Leaves the Isle of Coll, Arrival in London, Meets O'Keefe, and lives by Story-Telling; Banishment to Botany Bay; escapes and hides on board a Vessel bound to New-York; Meets an Algerine; Arrival in New-York; Peeps into the Museum, Play-House, &c. Conclusion."

The clause, "Meets an Algerine," is the point of interest. This episode was the first dramatic mention of the trouble with the Barbary States, which later was to instigate a series of plays. Morocco, Algiers, Tripoli, and Tunis at this time were nests of pirates, who jeopardized Mediterranean trade by their constant depredations. Their earliest offense against the United States occurred in October, 1784. In 1785 several Americans were captured and sold into slavery. The continuance of such outrages led to a futile war, which lasted from 1801 to 1805. At the time when "Shelty's Travels" was written, this country was especially indignant owing to the increasing violence of these offenses.[16] About a month after Dunlap's interlude, Mrs. Susannah Rowson's "Slaves in Algiers"

[16] "History of the War between the United States and Tripoli," Salem, 1806, pp. 41, 48, 67.

was acted. Thereafter the Mediterranean corsairs reappeared but once in American drama until after Captain Decatur's successful quelling of the pirates in 1815.[17]

"Fontainville Abbey," our author's next play, was an innovation, as a synopsis of the plot will show.

Act I. Scene: The hall of a ruined Gothic abbey. *La Motte,* fleeing the law against debtors, has taken refuge here with his wife and a fair unknown. The beauteous *Adeline,* we learn from their conversation, was forced upon him, on the way to the abbey, by a ruffian, who at the point of a pistol ordered him to remove her forever from his sight.

Act II. Enter the *Marquis de Montalt,* owner of the abbey, whom *La Motte* recognizes as an old enemy. Struck with the beauty of *Adeline,* the *Marquis* forces from *La Motte* a promise to betray her to his lust.

Act III. A dark, antique chamber. Night. *Adeline* finds a rusty dagger, a skeleton in an old chest, and a parchment revealing a crime. In another scene, the *Marquis* bribes *La Motte* to do away with the girl for some reason which he does not divulge.

[17] Later Algerine plays were "The American Captive; or, Siege of Tripoli" (1812), James Ellison; "The Young Carolinians; or, Americans in Algiers" (1818), anon.; "The Siege of Tripoli" (1820), M. M. Noah; "The Siege of Algiers; or, The Downfall of Hadgi-Ali-Bashaw" (1823), J. S. Smith; "The Fall of Algiers" (n. d.), J. H. Payne; "The Usurper; or, Americans in Tripoli" (*c.* 1842), J. Jones.

Act IV. Midnight. *La Motte* approaches the sleeping beauty to stab her. But his courage fails. He throws away his dagger, and swears to forsake his evil ways. The next morning *Adeline* explains that on the previous day the *Marquis* had seen a handkerchief of hers, containing a certain seal, which had thrown him into a panic.

Act V. A court of justice. The *Marquis* accuses *La Motte* of robbery. But the accused reveals the conspiracy against *Adeline,* and produces the parchment. The *Marquis* now discloses the fact that *Adeline* is the daughter of his brother, whom he had murdered years before for his property. He had bribed the ruffian of Act I to rear her, and had recently ordered her death. The *Marquis* is led to execution, while *La Motte* is acquitted.

"Fontainville Abbey" is graced with an epilogue spoken by Cupid, who complains that this author has twice banished him from his plays. He quotes the dramatist thus:

> "Too long," says he, "has Love usurp'd the boards:
> The tragic scene a wider scope affords:
> Each passion in its turn the mind should move.
> Shakespeare's best plays gain not their force from Love."

But though Cupid may lose the tragic throne, he will still reign supreme in comedy,

> "For Love and Hymen ever are *her* theme."

The preface reads:

"This tragedy, founded on Mrs. Radcliffe's Romance of the Forest, was written in the year 1794. It was first performed in the year 1795, and with complete success. Mr. Boaden's play of Fontainville Forest must have been performed about the same time in London."

Boaden's play, also based on the novel, was printed in 1794, and this adaptation probably called Dunlap's attention to the theatrical possibilities of Mrs. Radcliffe's book. That he was familiar with "Fontainville Forest" is pretty definitely proved by the fact that both dramas give the name of *Hortensia* to *Madame La Motte,* whereas in the novel she is called *Constance.* But here the evidence of borrowing ends. Dunlap's plot contains few episodes not found in Mrs. Radcliffe's work, but of necessity he omits many of her incidents, and thus simplifies the narrative. The main alterations are the omission of a lover for *Adeline,* and of the adventures in which she is involved with him and the substitution of acquittal of *La Motte* for banishment.

Dunlap was the first American writer to take a visible part in the so-called Gothic revival. Whether Charles Brockden Brown was responsible for his interest in the movement, or *vice versa,* at any rate Dunlap's initial effort in this direction appeared four years before that of his friend. As everybody knows, eighteenth century terroristic literature was inaugurated by Horace

Walpole's "Castle of Otranto" (1764), an unblushing tale of marvels and supernatural phenomena. Walpole's most gifted disciple was Mrs. Ann Radcliffe, who in "The Romance of the Forest" (1791) and other novels attempted to create an atmosphere of terror without resorting to the cheap claptrap of ghosts, animated portraits, etc. Dunlap imitated Mrs. Radcliffe in method as well as in plot. Like her, he presented a series of mysterious incidents, apparently arising from a supernatural cause, but followed shortly by a natural explanation.

"Fontainville Abbey" was more thoroughly Gothic than any of its dramatic precursors in England. Such plays as Jephson's "Count of Narbonne" and Cumberland's "Carmelite" were Gothic only in their gruesomeness and in the mystery in which certain characters were enveloped. Dunlap took much greater pains to emphasize the setting; he carefully located each scene in unmistakably Gothic surroundings. Such startling devices as skeletons, blood-rusted daggers, subterranean passages, and howling storms were freely introduced. In the use of terroristic machinery he was not a little like that incomparable Gothic dramatist, Matthew Gregory Lewis, whose famous "Castle Spectre" did not make its appearance until four years after "Fontainville Abbey" was written.

Aside from its importance in the beginnings of American Gothicism, this piece has another claim to consideration. As we have already seen, "Leicester" departed to a large extent from the

eighteenth century model, though still adhering to the unities. "Fontainville Abbey" broke entirely from this formal restraint, and became wholly and frankly a romantic tragi-comedy. As such it had but one predecessor, Mrs. Rowson's "Slaves in Algiers," acted a few months before. Dunlap's deliberate turning to the romantic type, exemplified in his first two serious plays, undoubtedly acted as one of the potent checks on conventional tragedy, for after 1795 that species almost disappeared from the United States.

William Dunlap's chief contribution to American opera was "The Archers; or, Mountaineers of Switzerland" (1796). English opera (that is, a form of play with songs interspersed) was enjoying continued favor on both sides of the Atlantic, and he knew that an imitation would be acceptable in New York.

"The Archers" is preceded by a prologue contrasting true and false liberty.

Act I. The Swiss, suffering under the oppression of *Gesler,* the Austrian governor, are preparing to revolt. *Rhodolpha,* the Diana-like daughter of *Walter Furst,* joins the rebels with her band of fifty Amazons.

Act II. The people are compelled to kneel to the governor's hat, placed on a pole before the castle. *Rhodolpha* humiliates a fat burgomaster who attempts to force her obedience to the order. *William Tell* preaches resistance, and is arrested.

Act III. *Tell* saves his life by shooting the ap-

ple from his son's head. By dint of great daring, he succeeds in killing *Gesler*. Then follows a pitched battle against the Austrians, in which the Swiss, led by *Tell* and assisted by *Rhodolpha* and her band, are victorious.

To the play is subjoined a brief historical account of Switzerland, from its first mention by Cæsar, through the revolution.

In the preface the author stated that two years before, an anonymous English opera, "Helvetic Liberty," was given him to adapt to our stage. Liking the subject, but finding the piece "incorrigible," he composed "The Archers." He admitted borrowing the burgomaster, an Austrian lieutenant, and *Rhodolpha* from "Helvetic Liberty," but added, "The other similarities are the necessary consequences of being both founded on the same historic fact." His debt, however, was somewhat larger than this statement implies. His outline is strictly that of the earlier play, and since history is equally violated in both, it is obvious that Dunlap got the skeleton of his plot from "Helvetic Liberty" rather than from the "historic fact." His chief alterations were a minimizing of the heroine's love affairs, and the addition of two humorous peasants.

It is to be questioned whether the American dramatist improved much on his "incorrigible" model. "The Archers" is devoid of anything like character drawing or intensity of effect. Nevertheless it furnishes opportunity for scenery, love-making, and martial pomp, the chief requirements

of a musical play; so a theatrical success might have been expected. Mr. Sonneck has said: "Dunlap was not a master-poet, but merely a dramatically gifted stage-manager. However, it would be unjust to deny 'The Archers' some forcible monologues and skilfully contrasted scenes."[18] Holcroft's verdict was this: "It ['The Archers'] proves you have made some progress; but it likewise proves, as far as I am a judge, that much remains for you to accomplish. Common thoughts, common characters, and common sensations have little attraction. . . . If you would attain the high gifts after which you so virtuously aspire, your perseverance must be energetic and unremitting."[19]

If a play be acted under the title of "The Mysterious Monk" (1796), and printed as "Ribbemont; or, The Feudal Baron," one is not surprised to encounter some such plot as this:

Act I. An antique castle. *Ribbemont* believes he has poisoned his wife, the *Countess Honoria,* and in a duel killed *Narbonne,* the man whom he was led to suspect of adultery with her.

Act II. The *Countess* is discovered living in a Gothic chapel, cared for by *Manuel,* a priest. *Manuel* tells her that he caused a sleeping potion to be substituted for the poison which *Ribbemont* intended to administer. In another scene *Ribbe-*

[18] "Early Opera in America," p. 98.

[19] From a letter to Dunlap quoted in "American Theatre," p. 160.

mont receives a letter which explains that an enemy has duped him into believing his wife guilty. The son, *Theodore,* sets out to avenge the wrong.

Act III. *Manuel,* perceiving *Ribbemont's* deep contrition, is on the point of revealing the truth, when word is received that *Theodore* has killed the enemy, and is now in prison awaiting execution.

Act IV. The *Baron* visits *Theodore* in prison. The son begs his father to supply him with poison, that he may not be disgraced by a public execution.

Act V. *Ribbemont* brings the poison, and both are on the point of suicide when the cry of "Pardon!" is heard. The *Countess* and *Manuel* rush in, and a reconciliation follows. *Manuel* now throws off his cowl and reveals *Narbonne,* who had survived the duel and assumed this disguise to protect the *Countess.*[20]

From this outline it is seen that "Ribbemont" is another Gothic drama of the "Fontainville Abbey" type. It is as free from actual supernaturalism as the other, but its setting, its mysteries, and its wide departure from reality are hallmarks of the terroristic school. In the art of playmaking "Ribbemont" shows no advance over its author's previous productions. Unmotivated, unconvincing, and filled with lifeless figures, it has

[20] In "American Theatre," p. 155, Dunlap said: "It may be remarked that the fable of this play can be traced in Tobin's posthumous drama of The Curfew, written many years after." "The Curfew," acted in London, 1807, tells a similar story, for which it may have been indebted to the American piece.

few redeeming features. Dunlap himself spoke disparagingly of it: "The play is not skilfully managed." "The characters and incidents were not in sufficient number, and the piece . . . is long since forgotten."[21] The blank verse, which shows a careful study of Shakespeare, is superior to the average of that time, but the conventionally theatrical and useless speeches are too numerous to allow the style any claim to excellence.

"The Man of Fortitude; or, The Knight's Adventure" (1797) seems to have occasioned a controversy between the director of the theatre and the star actor. In the "History of the American Theatre" we find this passage:

"The person we have designated the American manager, had written a piece in one act for the stage, and called it 'The Knight's Adventure.' It was in blank verse. He left it with Mr. Hodgkinson, and it was almost forgotten, when Hodgkinson told him that he had written a play, and called it 'The Man of Fortitude.' This was the whole of 'The Knight's Adventure,' partly in prose, with the addition of a comic buffoon, and a lady. The author of the piece remarked this to Hodgkinson, who did not deny it, only said he had 'altered everything,' and truly everything was altered. . . . The other laughed and asked for his one-act piece, but it was not forthcoming. . . . We scarcely believe the author was conscious of wrong in the

[21] "American Theatre," pp. 154–5.

transaction, as far as injury to another was concerned."[22]

Just what share in the finished play each man had, cannot now be determined, but Dunlap must have felt that it was largely his, because he included it in the prospectus of his ten-volume edition.[23] The finished plot is replete with thrills.

Act I. Scene: France. Time: Evening. A storm rages on a gloomy heath with an accompaniment of thunder and lightning. *Sir Bertrand* and his valet are seeking shelter. From peasants they learn of a haunted castle in a forest not far distant. The scene shifts to the castle. The storm continues. Blue lights flicker before the windows. A bell tolls. At *Bertrand's* approach, the door flies open. Within, a bloody spectre beckons to the knight, who draws his sword, whereupon the floor parts, and both disappear. The valet is seized by furies and spirited away.

Act II. A subterranean cavern. The spectres, having removed their disguises, now appear as robbers. The captain, against the remonstrances of his band, inclines to mercy. He confesses to *Bertrand* his love for a female prisoner, who spurns his advances. The lady is produced and proves to be *Sir Bertrand's* bride, stolen on their wedding-day. The captain, holding this to be a ruse, orders that the knight be tortured.

Act III. *Bertrand* is placed on the wheel.

[22] p. 171.
[23] See *ante*, p. 85 n.

Hortensia offers to yield to the captain's desire, but as he approaches her she draws a dagger and prepares to stab him. Overwhelmed by her heroism and devotion, he relents and frees both. *Bertrand* now promises a royal pardon.

It may be safely assumed that Dunlap's original plot was not greatly different from this, with the exception of the *Hortensia* element. The spectres and banditti are undoubtedly his. Here again is a Gothic tragi-comedy, which eliminates the supernatural by solving all the mysteries,—Mrs. Radcliffe's method once more.

The central idea of Dunlap's one-act piece—the supposedly haunted castle, inhabited by robbers, who threaten but spare the life of the hero—was unquestionably taken from "Caleb Williams." In Chapters XXVIII and XXIX of Godwin's novel, *Caleb* falls among thieves, whose den is a ruined castle in a forest near a deserted heath. The superstitious peasantry believe the ruin haunted, because of the lights and nocturnal revelry. The hero's life is threatened by certain members of the gang, but the leader, *Raymond,* saves him. Between *Raymond* and the captain in the play there is an important parallel. Both outlaws took up arms against society in their rage over the iniquity of the ruling class and the inequality of the laws.

Dunlap's bandit plot, however, was not due solely to "Caleb Williams." It was one of the numerous offspring of "Die Räuber." This drama of the youthful Schiller emerged from the press in 1781, and immediately became famous all over

Europe. Its protagonist is *Karl Moor,* who, having fallen into loose ways at the university, is disinherited by his father. Thereupon the desperate youth places himself at the head of a robber band. After a career of outlawry, he repents and surrenders himself to justice.

The earliest English imitation of "Die Räuber" was O'Keeffe's "Castle of Andalusia," which began a brilliant run at Covent Garden in 1782.[24] In this light opera, *Don Cæsar* has been driven to lawlessness by the persecution of his father. In the end he renounces his bandit life. Another apparent imitation was "Robin Hood; or, Sherwood Forest" (1784), an opera by Leonard MacNally. The *Earl of Huntingdon,* suffering under the injustice of the king, takes to the forest, but finally returns to lawful ways. "The Battle of Hexham" (1789), by the younger Colman, also contains a bandit episode involving a similar idea. To America the robber *motif* was introduced by "The Castle of Andalusia" in 1788. In 1793 Tytler's translation of "Die Räuber," made in England in 1792, was reprinted in New York. "The Battle of Hexham" was acted at New York in 1794. "Robin Hood" was given twice at New York in the same year. The American *première* of "The Robbers" occurred at the same city in 1795.[25] Our earliest contribution to the drama of outlawry was "Edwin

[24] Genest, Vol. VI, p. 263.

[25] Seilhamer, Vol. II, p. 242; Vol. III, pp. 80–1, 108; E. C. Parry, "German American Annals," new series, Vol. III, p. 86; C. F. Brede, same journal, p. 257.

and Angelina," an opera by Elihu Hubbard Smith, performed for the first time in December, 1796, but written some years before.[26] Here recurs the Schiller formula of injustice leading to a bandit life, with the repentance and reform finale.

With such antecedents, the source of the robber theme in "The Knight's Adventure" is not far to seek. Supposing it to have been written about 1796, Dunlap had opportunity to read "Die Räuber" in translation, and to witness it on the stage, along with "The Castle of Andalusia," "Robin Hood," and "The Battle of Hexham." "Edwin and Angelina," the work of a close friend, he undoubtedly saw in manuscript. With such incentives, it is entirely characteristic of Dunlap that he should seize on the striking episode in Godwin's novel, and turn it into a drama. "The Man of Fortitude" was the second American robber play to appear on the stage, Smith's opera preceding it by a few months.

In 1780 occurred one of the most dramatic events of the Revolutionary War, the capture of Major John André. Because of the possible consequences involved in the Arnold-André conspiracy, and because of the admirable character of the British spy, the effect produced by the incident was most profound. Indeed, ever since, it has occupied a place in the American mind considerably out of proportion to its historic importance. Playwrights have made capital of it over and over

[26] "American Theatre," p. 156; preface to the opera.

again.[27] Dunlap was not the first to dramatize the theme, but, as Professor Brander Matthews has said: "Of all the plays on the subject of Arnold's treason and André's sad fate, the 'André' of William Dunlap is easily best, both as literature and as a successful acting drama."[28]

The preface, written in 1798, reads in part:

"More than nine years ago the author made choice of the death of Major André as the subject of a Tragedy, and part of what is now offered to the public was written at that time. Many circumstances discouraged him from finishing his play, and among them must be reckoned a prevailing opinion that recent events are unfit subjects for tragedy."

The prologue apologizes for violating this opinion and for altering the historic facts. A judgment of the play on its own merits, unprejudiced by party spirit, is requested.

Act I. *André* has been captured, and is awaiting execution. *Capt. Bland,* an American officer, resolves to aid the doomed man if possible, out of gratitude for his assistance when *Bland* was a British prisoner.

Act II. The prison. *André,* solus, laments the

[27] See Seilhamer, Vol. III, pp. 12, 363; "André," Publications of the Dunlap Society, No. 4, 1887, introduction. In addition, "Major André," by Clyde Fitch, should be mentioned.

[28] "André," Publications of the Dunlap Society, introduction, p. xxiv.

disgrace which has fallen on him. *Bland* enters and declares he shall not die. The spy asks only that the sentence be altered from hanging to shooting.

Act III. *Bland* pleads with *Washington* (designated as the *General*) for the life of his friend, but without avail. In his wrath he tears the cockade from his helmet. *Bland's* mother enters the camp and begs that *André* be spared in order to save her husband, who is held by the British as a hostage for the safety of the captive.

Act IV. *Bland's* ire flames again, and he insults his superior officer. *Honora, André's* sometime fiancée, who has come from England seeking him, enters the prison and faints in his arms. He had been led by her father to believe that she had married another, but he now learns of the deception.

Act V. *Bland* apologizes for his insubordination.[29] *Honora* beseeches *Washington* to pardon her lover. Upon his refusal, she becomes insane and is led away by *Mrs. Bland.* In the final scene *André* goes bravely to execution.

In an appendix to the play, Dunlap printed a number of documents which show the relation of the tragedy to history. We learn that André was once engaged to Honora Seward. But the ro-

[29] The preface contains twenty-nine additional lines to be inserted here, in which *Bland* replaces the cockade, declaring that he will wear it thenceforth as his proudest ornament. The play was in print before it was acted; hence the alteration which the first audience seemed to demand could not be inserted in the text itself.

mance was blighted by parental opposition, and Honora consoled herself by marrying another man. There are some letters called out by the trial. In one of these André requested that he be shot rather than hanged. In another he spoke of certain prisoners, held by the British at Charleston, whose treatment might be largely affected by his own. Dunlap, then, had some basis for the love affair with *Honora,* though in reality it took a much less romantic turn than in the drama. The spy's efforts to obtain the substitution of shooting for hanging were founded on fact. The *Blands* were invented for the occasion, but the idea of a hostage was probably suggested by André's reference to the Charleston prisoners.

Several plays before "André" had dealt with American history, but Dunlap's tragedy surpassed them all. In general the early historical dramas were unusually poor affairs, and for this reason "André's" modest merit may be easily overestimated. Professor Matthews spoke perhaps too enthusiastically when he said: " 'André' is a better piece of work than most of the plays even of high pretensions, which were produced in Great Britain and the United States toward the end of the last century."[30] Yet it must be classed among the most worthy efforts of our early dramatists. To be sure, it is artificial and sentimental, but on the whole it is rather satisfying. The characters are consistently if slightly drawn. The tone reaches a

[30] "André," Publications of the Dunlap Society, introduction, p. xiii.

certain degree of intensity in places, especially in *Honora's* grief. The blank verse is even and dignified, free both from puerility and from inspiration.

That Dunlap knew to some extent and admired Elizabethan drama is proved by "The Italian Father" (1799). In the preface he said: "Those who are well versed in old english dramatic literature, will perceive that the author has enriched his work from those obsolete sources without forfeiting his claim to originality in the composition." Dekker it was whom he pressed into service, as the "History of the American Theatre" acknowledged. But the borrowing was not sufficient in Dunlap's eyes to destroy his pride in the play, for he considered this to be his best dramatic achievement.[31] Unfortunately, a comparison of "The Italian Father" with "The Honest Whore," part two, reveals an amount of plagiarism which leaves him only a meagre remnant to call his own.

Act I. *Hippolito,* a prominent citizen of Milan, is accosted by *Astrabel* with the entreaty that he save her husband, *Beraldo,* condemned to die for dueling. *Hippolito* learns that her father, *Michael Brazzo,* has disowned her for unchastity.

Act II. *Beraldo* returns from prison, having been liberated by *Hippolito's* intercession. *Brazzo,* disguised as a servant, enters the household of his daughter in order to study her and to help her if she proves worthy. He is immediately con-

[31] "American Theatre," p. 266.

vinced that *Astrabel* has reformed, but decides to make a final test. For this purpose he induces *Hippolito* to tempt her to incontinence again.

Act III. *Hippolito* assails her chastity by means of jewels and tender epistles. He also sends rich gifts to *Beraldo,* who returns them, refusing to sell his wife.

Act IV. The jealousy of *Hippolito's* wife, *Beatrice,* is aroused by his attentions to *Astrabel,* and is allayed with some difficulty. *Beraldo* is on the point of fighting with *Hippolito* over the honor of *Astrabel,* when *Brazzo* intervenes and explains that it was all a test, which both husband and wife have stood admirably.

Act V. *Brazzo,* satisfied with *Astrabel's* conduct and convinced of her love for him, reveals himself and forgives her.

The outline of the play was taken bodily from "The Honest Whore." Each of Dunlap's characters has an exact prototype in Dekker. *Hippolito* is Dekker's *Hippolito, Beatrice* is *Infelice, Astrabel* is *Bellafront, Beraldo* is *Matheo* (one of Dekker's minor figures is called *Beraldo*), *Brazzo* is *Orlando Friscobaldo* (disguised in both plays as *Pacheco*). The resemblance is especially strong in the first two acts, in which our author even took sections of dialogue verbatim from his source. The chief departures from the original are two: Dekker's *Hippolito* tempts *Bellafront* from an evil motive; in "The Italian Father" the temptation is only a test. *Matheo* is a thorough rascal, who at the end is saved from a deserved death on

the scaffold only by the intervention of *Friscobaldo; Beraldo,* on the other hand, is but superficially bad. Once an honorable man, he has been forced by circumstances into evil ways; in the crisis his better self regains the ascendancy.

Dunlap's originality asserted itself in the sub-plot. Abandoning Dekker altogether, he substituted one somewhat suggestive of the comic element in "Twelfth Night." *Lodovico* (the name from Dekker), a merry friend of *Hippolito's,* declares his passion for *Leonora, Beatrice's* maid. With the help of the fool she leads him on, only to play a ridiculous trick on him in the end. This sub-plot is pretty good humor, quite after the Elizabethan manner both in its farcical vivacity and its word-play.

With all respect to Dekker be it said that in certain respects Dunlap improved on his source. "The Italian Father" is simpler in construction and more closely knit, because several superfluous characters are removed, and the sub-plot is brought into closer relation with the main plot. Dunlap's prose diction is clearer than Dekker's mixture of prose, rhyme, and blank verse. In other words the American playwright used his well-developed technical skill to reconstruct the piece according to the canons of the contemporary stage. The result was a theatrically successful drama. But in its less superficial aspects the original far surpasses the imitation. *Friscobaldo* is a great character; *Brazzo* is only a stage figure. *Bellafront* is a very human woman; *Astrabel* is a

formal echo. *Matheo* is a persistently evil man; *Beraldo* is an easily manipulated puppet.

It is not difficult to understand why Dunlap should have turned to "The Honest Whore" for dramatic material. It is an example of Elizabethan sensibility, though uncontaminated by the mawkish, lacrymose sentimentality that deluged the eighteenth century with tears. The New York playwright saw that this tale of family distress and reconciliation was congenial to the taste of his time, and he proceeded to adapt it to his theatre with certain expurgations. It was a tenet of the sentimental school that virtue is more potent than vice; that a good man is always good, and an evil man may be suddenly and violently converted. According to this philosophy Dunlap revised "The Honest Whore." *Hippolito's* fall from virtue he deleted, making him instead a constant champion of morals. And *Beraldo,* unlike his prototype, undergoes a complete change of heart.

"Tristram Shandy" was apparently one of Dunlap's favorite books, for ten years after "The Father" he again paid it the tribute of adaptation. He took, as the foundation for his second play, an incident recorded briefly in Chapter XXIV of the last book of Sterne's eccentric novel. *Maria,* the village beauty, having lost her senses when her banns were forbidden, now sits all day on a bank, plaintively playing on her pipe. On this slender theme Dunlap constructed an opera, "Sterne's Maria; or, The Vintage,"—with what

success it is impossible to say, since it was never printed. Our only information is the author's own statement that the *dramatis personæ* included *Yorick, La Fleur,* and *Nannette,* and that "the piece pleased and was pleasing."[32] No doubt sentimentality was not the least conspicuous element.

"André" was not a stage success. No wonder, since its hero was a British spy. Perhaps Dunlap saw the paradox and felt that the same episode presented from the American standpoint would have a greater claim to popularity. At any rate, in 1803 "The Glory of Columbia—Her Yeomanry!" again dramatized the Arnold-André conspiracy, but now the hero was the American common people, and the appeal was made frankly to national feeling. Its close relation to the earlier play is apparent from the fact that nine of the nineteen scenes were taken from "André" with little or no alteration.

Act I. *Benedict Arnold* is meditating treason. His servant, *David Williams,* suspecting him of disloyalty, leaves him. Scene III abruptly and irrelevantly introduces *Mrs. Bland* and her children. In Scene IV *Arnold* and *André* meet and complete the plot. In the final scene *Williams* and his sister, *Sally,* are set upon by three English soldiers, but the unarmed Americans are more than a match for them.

Act II. *André* is captured by *Paulding, Van*

[32] "American Theatre," pp. 259–60.

Vert, and *Williams.*[33] He attempts to buy his escape with the offer of great wealth, but the yeomen are bribe-proof. The remainder of the act is taken up with the praise of Washington and other patriots, and with *Sally's* attempt to disguise herself as a soldier.

Act III. *Capt. Bland* intercedes with *Washington* for the life of the spy. The unfortunate cockade episode is omitted. This act is composed entirely of scenes from different parts of "André."

Act IV is made up of the escapades of an Irishman who deserts the British, and of the *Honora* incidents.

Act V. *Washington* exhorts the soldiers to make one final effort and all is won. Scene II represents the battle of Yorktown. After much cannonading the Americans gain the victory. All join in a hymn in praise of God and Washington. "A transparency descends, and an eagle is seen suspending a crown of laurel over the head of the commander-in-chief, with this motto—'Immortality to Washington.' "

"The Glory of Columbia" is one of Dunlap's poorest plays. The better parts were taken from "André" and arranged haphazard. The new material was constructed hastily and with the sole idea of capturing an ebullient Fourth of July audience. The Irish humor is painful and has no

[33] It appears that when this play was given at the South Street Theatre in Philadelphia on July 4, 1807, a drop-scene, painted by André during his Revolutionary connection with the Philadelphia theatre, was used as background for this episode. See "André," Publications of the Dunlap Society, introduction, pp. xiv, xv.

connection with anything else in the piece. The whole composition is a disjointed, operatic hodge-podge, sugar-coated with copious quantities of patriotism. That the American public of the time was uncritical is indicated by the fact that "The Glory of Columbia" was repeated over and over again, while the greatly superior "André" disappeared from the stage after three performances. When the subject was America, the playgoers demanded not art, but the screaming of the eagle. In this connection it is interesting to note the success of Burk's atrocious "Bunker Hill; or, The Death of Gen. Warren" (1797).

"Bonaparte in England" (1803) was a timely farce based on the following newspaper account of a contemporary event:

"The man apprehended at Portsmouth, under suspicion of being JEROME BONAPARTE, is discharged. He had much the looks of an *Italian Jew* (!!) which is said to be the case with Jerome. While under confinement he was treated with the greatest politeness, which he took full advantage of, ordered every thing to the best, and kicked one of the persons down stairs, who was appointed to attend him, for some slight disrespect. On being discharged, he desired the officers to tell their employers that as they had insisted upon his being the first consul's brother, *he had lived up to the character!*"[34]

[34] "New York Evening Post," December 20, 1803, reprinted this notice from a London paper.

Dunlap made his hero a German Jew broker, named *Shadrach,* who, being shipwrecked on the coast of England, was seized as the brother of Napoleon. The broker tried to do justice to the honor, and by his lordly air gained the homage of a certain Irish officer, who confused him with Napoleon himself.[35] The critics pronounced it a laughable farce. Undoubtedly there are possibilities for comedy in the idea, and it is to be regretted that the play was not published.

Concerning "The Proverb; or, Conceit Can Cure, Conceit Can Kill" (1804), we know only the little that Dunlap transcribed from a newspaper notice:

"The plot contains considerable novelty of incident. It exhibits a picture of mountebank quackery, common in Europe, though little known in this country. The quack, with his attendant apparatus of stage and Jack Pudding, is introduced. The plot turns on the manœuvres of a couple of gentlemen who assume the above disguises; the object of one being to regain his wife; the other to obtain the hand of a mistress."[36]

Dunlap's love of country expressed itself both at the beginning and the end of the War of 1812. The final victory was dramatized in "The Battle of New Orleans." The commencement of hostilities called forth the musical interlude of "Yankee

[35] See "American Theatre," p. 322.
[36] *Ibid.,* p. 323.

Chronology; or, Huzza for the Constitution!" The preface, dated November 28, 1812, reads:

"The song of Yankee Chronology was written for the fourth of July last, excepting the last verse. Upon the arrival of the news of the victory obtained by captain Isaac Hull of the Constitution, over the english frigate the Guerriere, mr. Cooper called upon the writer and requested an additional verse, and an introductory interlude. My wishes were too much in unison with his to allow of hesitation. On the anniversary of the evacuation of this place, another verse was requested and given; and the writer would be happy to evince his gratitude to every defender of his country's rights, by adding for each a tribute of applause, till his song outdid chevy-chase in the number of verses."

The prose introduction took the form of a street scene in New York. *Ben Bundle,* who fought on the *Constitution,* returns home and vigorously describes the battle to his father and one *O'Blunder.* He then favors them with a song, "Yankee Chronology." This song, as originally written, contained nine stanzas of ten lines each, recounting Revolutionary events from Lexington to Yorktown, and urging the United States to conquer the same "haughty nation" again. After the victory of the *Constitution* on August 19, a tenth stanza was added, and a final one was annexed on November 25, commemorating the evacuation of New York. As might be expected, this interlude con-

tains a great deal of patriotism and very little art. Its popularity is a further commentary on the public taste.

Dunlap's last play, "A Trip to Niagara; or, Travellers in America" (1828), was, as he stated in the preface, no more than a farce intended as a running accompaniment to the scenery. The author confessed to using any material that might amuse the audience.

Act I. *Amelia Wentworth* and her brother from England are stopping in New York during a tour of the United States. She is enthusiastic, he is disgusted, with everything American. Their cousin, *John Bull,* in love with *Amelia,* suddenly appears. To her he proposes the cure of *Wentworth,* suggesting herself as the reward. The three plan a trip up the Hudson and across to Niagara. As the first step in the curative process, *Bull* assumes the disguise and accent of a Frenchman. The second scene represents a boat-landing. The porters of the various boats are vociferously striving to decoy passengers into their respective vessels. *Bull* now appears as *Jonathan* and annoys *Wentworth.*

Act II presents the Diorama, showing eighteen views along the Hudson. The passengers land at Catskill. *Wentworth* protests that he hardly saw the scenery, having been exasperated all the way by a Yankee and a Frenchman. An Irishman, *Dennis Doherty,* furnishes some diversion in this act.

Act III opens with a mountain sunrise. *Wentworth's* enjoyment of nature is again rudely jarred by the ubiquitous Frenchman. Enter *Leatherstocking,* who recounts some adventures from "The Pioneers." The party goes to Albany and thence to Buffalo. *Jonathan* suddenly changes his tactics, and by vilifying the Yankees and everything connected therewith, so arouses *Wentworth's* contradictory spirit that he begins defending the country. Thereupon *Bull* reveals himself, and gains the necessary consent to his match with *Amelia.* The final scene is at Niagara Falls, where *Wentworth* admits that America is a great and glorious land.

So "A Trip to Niagara" is merely a series of disconnected and puerile scenes and irrelevant characters. No doubt a certain amount of low comedy could be extracted from it, for the humor is frequent and boisterous; but unless the scenery was strikingly excellent the audience with reason might have demanded its money back. Apparently, however, the uncritical playgoers were satisfied, inasmuch as this farce was given at least twenty-four performances, a run equaled only by "The Glory of Columbia."

Not the least interesting feature of "A Trip to Niagara" is the dialect characters. Dunlap here made use of the four most common types to be found in early American plays: the negro, the Frenchman, the Yankee, and the Irishman. Perhaps because of his humble social position, the negro was not exploited at this time as often as

one might expect. *Job Jerryson* of the present play is the only extant example of his use by Dunlap. This dusky gentleman, it should be noted, has somehow lost the dialect which distinguished his forerunners, and under the influence of northern liberty he speaks like a lord of the land.

The Frenchman with broken English was pressed into service quite as often as the negro, and generally he was treated with scant respect. Either he was made the butt of a joke or he was represented as a worthless character. Possibly this was a reflection of the strained relations which existed between the United States and France from about 1793 until the War of 1812. In "A Trip to Niagara" the Gallic element is merely a disguise and reveals no animosity, but in translating "The Wild Goose Chace" (1800), Dunlap arbitrarily turned the mistreated hair-dresser into a Frenchman.[37]

That Tyler's *Jonathan* was a real contribution to early American drama is attested by the number of imitations. I have met a dozen Yankees, including the one in Dunlap's first play, by 1828, and no doubt there were others. Though the *Jonathan* of "A Trip to Niagara" is a disguise figure, yet he possesses many qualities of the original,—noticeably shrewdness and humor. He even perpetrates the famous Yankee joke of nutmegs made from pine boards.

The favorite dialect personage was the Irishman. I have counted twenty-two plays with Irish

[37] See *post*, p. 218.

characters by 1828. Probably his popularity in the United States was a result of his popularity on the English stage. Dunlap, who came of Irish stock, was especially fond of the race. Not less than seven of his pieces contain Hibernians: "Darby's Return," "The Glory of Columbia," "Bonaparte in England," "Lewis of Monte Blanco; or, The Transplanted Irishman," "The Wife of Two Husbands," "Yankee Chronology," and "A Trip to Niagara." These Irishmen of his are a particularly irresponsible tribe, and their speech is as replete with bulls and brogue as a true son of Erin's should be.

In the appendix to his "History of the American Theatre" Dunlap gave himself credit for two plays to which he was not entitled: "Blue Beard" and "The Africans." "Blue Beard," the work of George Colman the Younger, after a few seasons at Drury Lane appeared on the New York stage in 1802, and was often repeated for several years.[38] It was printed at New York in 1803, reprinted in 1806, and again in 1811. The title-page bears this clause: "As altered for the New-York Theatre: With additional songs, By Wm. Dunlap, Esq." A comparison of the New York edition with the London edition of 1798 shows that Dunlap divided the drama into three instead of the original two acts, and rearranged the order of episodes somewhat; but his actual contribution amounted to one song in Act I, Scene I.

[38] "New York Evening Post," March 8, 1802, and following issues.

The second misappropriated play was also the work of Colman. "The Africans; or, War, Love, and Duty" was first presented at the Haymarket in 1808. Its New York *première* took place on January 2, 1810.[39] It was printed anonymously at Philadelphia in 1811. It is impossible to say whether Dunlap had anything to do with this version or not, but it is probable that during his second connection with the theatre he treated "The Africans" much as he had before treated "Blue Beard." That he wrote an original play of this name is very unlikely, because the "American Theatre" makes no mention of such a title, aside from a direct reference to Colman's drama in this sentence: "January 2d, 1810, 'The Africans' had a run."[40]

"Rinaldo Rinaldini" is a name which Dunlap included in his bibliography, and consequently an anonymous "Rinaldo Rinaldini," "by an American and a citizen of New-York," printed in 1810, has been generally ascribed to him. Frederick H. Wilkens, however, has expressed a doubt as to the accuracy of this attribution.[41] He unquestionably has grounds for his suspicion. Poor as some of Dunlap's work was, he never descended to the formless, puerile impotence of this so-called tragedy. He was always capable of writing passable blank verse, whereas this affair is composed

[39] "Evening Post" of that date. A criticism in the issue of January 5 definitely called it Colman's play.

[40] p. 357.

[41] "Americana Germanica," Vol. III, p. 135.

in a sort of *vers libre* of from three to six feet. Moreover, the preface indicates that it came from the pen of a novice:

"I am sensible of the disadvantage which I consequently labour under, from a confined education; nor do I expect my style will be thought equal, in elegance or energy, to the productions of those who, fortunately, from their situation in life, have been instructed in the Classics. . . .

"The reason [for the failure of the play to appear on the stage] is very obvious; the Author not having an opportunity from the time of its being written, to the publication. The Play was written for the Stage, but never offered."

Now in 1810 Dunlap was one of the managers of the theatre; he therefore would have no reason to complain of lack of opportunity for presenting his play. It is said to have appeared on the boards of the Park Theatre sometime in 1810.[42] If this was the case the situation would seem to be that Dunlap revised the printed copy for the stage and presented it. There are no grounds for believing that he wrote another "Rinaldo Rinaldini."

For two titles in Dunlap's bibliography I have no data. "Forty and Twenty" and "Robespierre" were apparently neither acted nor printed, and I

[42] Wegelin, "Early American Plays," edition of 1905, p. 35.

am unable to say when they were written, or whether they were originals or translations.[43]

III

I HAVE termed the plays considered in this chapter "original," but the word is to be understood only in a relative sense, as distinguishing them from the translations. The foregoing discussion has brought out the fact that in practically every instance Dunlap was indebted to some outside source for his central idea. Almost invariably he borrowed his essential elements from a novel, a historical event, or another play, as he always frankly admitted. To be sure, borrowing plots is a practice sanctioned by the most unimpeachable precedent, but the result is notable only when the borrowing is revitalized by the author's personality. Such an achievement requires creative power, and creative power was what Dunlap lacked. His mind could not evolve an original conception. Only when the idea came to him ready-made, could he produce a drama, and even then his accomplishment was frequently but little more than a change of form. His equipment consisted chiefly of a knowledge of stagecraft and a

[43] Mr. Wegelin, "Early American Plays," Publications of the Dunlap Society, second series, No. 10, 1900, p. 38, has placed "It Is a Lie!" among Dunlap's unpublished dramas, which, he says, was acted at the New Bowery Theatre on August 20, 1828. A farce called "Is It a Lie?" was given there at that time, but I find no reason for associating it with Dunlap.

certain facility of composition, equipment which fitted him to be a dramatic remodeler rather than a creator.

Of Dunlap's quasi-original plays, eleven were printed as they came from his pen, and one as revised by another hand. These twelve pieces may be taken as favorably representative of his work, since he listed all but "Yankee Chronology" and "A Trip to Niagara" in the prospectus of his ten-volume edition. From first to last he showed a peculiar lack of improvement. Perhaps his best dramas are his second and fourth—"The Father" and "Leicester." Certainly his last is one of his poorest. His career as a writer for the stage may be divided into two periods. The first, from 1787 to the end of 1799, was a period of fairly continuous work. The second, from 1800 to 1828, was a period of occasional composition which produced only about the same number of dramas as the first period of less than half its length. Moreover, in the first period he did almost all his better work, at least so far as we know it. The cause of this situation is not far to seek. Before his theatrical troubles thickened around him, Dunlap was a man of comfortable means and sufficient leisure for his hobbies. In the fall of 1798 the sole directorship of the theatre devolved on him. From then on, his time and finances were taxed to the utmost. The harassed man was now compelled to exercise his pen in manufacturing such things as would attract the largest crowds. Translation was the solution he hit upon, as did Richard

Brinsley Sheridan in a similar predicament. By adapting a popular writer of France or Germany, he could quickly and inexpensively obtain a play which would be sure to draw vastly better than his most careful original dramas. The preparation of several foreign novelties each year consumed nearly all the little leisure allowed him by his position, and when the opportunity to do independent work did offer itself, he hastily knocked together something like "The Glory of Columbia," that would be likely to fill the house. When the managerial enterprise came to a disastrous close, the grim struggle with poverty began, to end only with death. Play-writing then could hardly be thought of, because of all professions it was the most precarious during this time of contempt for native literature. If Dunlap's products of the second period were inferior to those of the first, it was not from any loss of the ability displayed in his earlier years. "André" and "The Italian Father" show as much skill as any of his plays, because somehow the author still found time to work deliberately. Under such circumstances he was capable of constructing a theatrically effective drama, for he understood the mechanics of his craft. Professor Matthews truly said: "That Dunlap was not a poet, in any strict acceptation of the word, needs no discussion; he was a competent playwright, and he knew how to make a drama in accordance with the tenets of his time."[44]

[44] "André," Publications of the Dunlap Society, introduction, p. xiii.

Therefore there is every reason to believe that he would have achieved more worthy results in his second period had he been able to devote all his faculties to the task.

That he was accorded a high place by his contemporaries, may be seen from the following quotations. The "London Magazine" in 1826 published a letter from Philadelphia on "American Dramatists," which contained this sentence: "The name of William Dunlap stands at the head of the list of American dramatists: his muse has been prolific, having produced forty-five pieces of this nature, many of which indicate respectable dramatic talent."[45] According to the "American Quarterly Review" of 1827, "The earliest dramatic writer of New-York, and we think the best, was William Dunlap."[46] "The New York Mirror" in 1833 said:

"As a dramatist, Mr. Dunlap has never received his due praise. If we consider the number of his works, he will be found, we believe, to have been by far the most prolific writer for the American stage. If he be judged by the criterion of success, it will be discovered that as large a proportion of his pieces keep possession of the boards, as of the average of dramatic writers, who are numbered among the permanent classics of the theatre. His numerous pieces were almost invariably performed with applause; and, free as they are from false

[45] New series, Vol. VI, pp. 466 ff.
[46] Vol. I, p. 350.

taste and extravagance, show the power of fixing attention and exciting interest by legitimate means —of touching the true springs of mirth and pity and terror." The diction of his blank verse "is natural and spirited, and sometimes rises into beauty." In all his work "he has been careful to keep in view the true and nobler uses of the drama, and to direct it to results favorable to virtue."[47]

A comparison of the plays of Dunlap's first period with those of other American writers prior to 1800 indicates very clearly that he was the only playwright deserving the name whom this country had as yet produced. Godfrey had written a passable play, but only one. Brackenridge's rhetorical compositions were not intended to be acted. Mrs. Warren's pieces, consisting of several political pamphlets in dramatic form and two inferior tragedies, never appeared in the theatre. Tyler could boast of but three plays. Mrs. Rowson was a novelist who occasionally turned to drama. Burk was an editor and historian who brought out four ranting plays. Our author gave to the theatre during this period an average of rather more than one drama a year, the worst equal to the average of his predecessors, and the best considerably better than anything yet written. Dunlap, then, was the first American to lay claim to the title of professional dramatist by writing a succession of moderately good plays that were actually staged. His mild superiority was the result of several qualities. He had a sense of humor. He could

[47] Vol. X, p. 266.

write smoother prose and more literary blank verse than his rivals. And, better still, he knew how to build a play to secure continuous interest and suspense.

Between 1800 and 1828, when Dunlap finally ceased writing for the theatre, a few dramatists came to the front, who, though producing a smaller quantity than he did, were more highly endowed. Among these may be mentioned James Nelson Barker, John Howard Payne, and Samuel Woodworth. But if they surpassed their older contemporary, it was in part owing to the fact that he had gone before and blazed the trail. For though Dunlap was an imitator of foreign tendencies, yet in this very imitation he proved to be an innovator and pioneer in the history of American drama. It would be futile to attempt to point out any specific influence of his on his immediate followers, because it is impossible to separate his influence from that of the general type he was copying; yet it cannot be doubted that his work helped attract other writers to the forms with which he dealt.

His first acted play was a sentimental comedy, a species which had long been very prominent in England. But "The Father" was only the second of the kind to be composed in this country, Tyler's "Contrast" having preceded it by a year or two. Subsequently Dunlap staged three other pieces of sentimentalism, "Sterne's Maria," "The Natural Daughter,"[48] and "The Italian Father." It is safe

[48] This play was not printed, but the title, deriving from Cumberland's "Natural Son," indicates sentimental content.

to assume that these added their weight to the influence of the English representatives to call into being the large body of sentimental drama, which soon began appearing here.[49]

An important division of Dunlap's writing was the patriotic play. In this field he was not a pioneer, but he was the most generous contributor. Throughout his career this staunch patriot employed his pen in praise of his native land. At the outset he wrote "Darby's Return," the purpose of which was to glorify America. Then came "André," "The Soldier of '76," "The Temple of Independence," "The Glory of Columbia," "Yankee Chronology," "The Battle of New Orleans," and "A Trip to Niagara." Perhaps he helped

[49] I have found the following sentimental dramas, which were written in the United States between Dunlap's first acted play and his last (1789–1828). This and the lists below are not exhaustive, but they show the tendencies during the years of Dunlap's dramatic authorship. "The Yorker's Stratagem" (1792), J. Robinson; "Slaves in Algiers" (1794), Susannah Rowson; "The Triumphs of Love" (1795), J. Murdock; "The Man of the Times" (1797), Beete; "Reparation" (1800), T. P. Lathy; "The Hypocrite Unmasked" (1801), W. Winstanley; "He Stoops to Conquer" (1804), John Minshull; "Julia" (1806), J. H. Payne; "Tears and Smiles" (1807), J. N. Barker; "Jonathan Postfree" (1807), L. Beach; "The Trust" (1808) and "The Fox Chase" (1808), Charles Breck; "The School for Prodigals" (1809), "Fashionable Follies" (1809), and "The Wounded Hussar" (1809), Joseph Hutton; "Love and Friendship" (1809), A. B. Lindsley; "The Child of Feeling" (1809), George Watterson; "The Clergyman's Daughter" (1810) and "The Poor Lodger" (1811), W. C. White; "The Yankey in England" (1815), David Humphreys; "Clari" (1823), J. H. Payne.

popularize this type, for national affairs became one of the commonest themes in our early drama.[50]

In the history of ballad-opera Dunlap occupies a considerable place. Several operas had been written in this country before he attempted the form, but "Darby's Return" was the first to reach the stage. It was followed by "The Archers," "Sterne's Maria," "The Wild Goose Chace" (altered into an opera from Kotzebue), "The Knight of Guadalquiver," and "The Glory of Columbia." No doubt it was partly as a result of these that plays interspersed with songs grew to be very numerous at the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth.[51]

[50] Partial list of patriotic dramas during Dunlap's period: "Slaves in Algiers" (1794), Susannah Rowson; "The Death of Major André" (*c.* 1795), Mrs. Marriott; "Bunker Hill" (1797) and "The Death of Montgomery" (1797), John Burk; "West Point Preserved" (1797), Brown; "A New World Planted" (1802), Joseph Croswell; "The Battle of Eutaw Springs and Evacuation of Charlestown" (1807), William Ioor; "The Indian Princess" (1808), J. N. Barker; "The Battle of New Orleans" (1816), C. E. Grice; "Triumph of Liberty" (1819), J. B. White; "She Would be a Soldier" (1819) and "Marion" (1821), M. M. Noah; "The Spy" (1822), C. P. Clinch; "A Tale of Lexington" (1823), S. B. H. Judah; "The Widow's Son" (1825), Samuel Woodworth; "Indian Prophecy" (1828), G. W. P. Custis.

[51] Partial list of musical plays during Dunlap's period: "The Reconciliation" (1790), Peter Markoe; "Tammany" (1794), Ann Hatton; "Slaves in Algiers" (1794), Susannah Rowson; "Edwin and Angelina" (1796), E. H. Smith; "Rural Felicity" (1801) and "The Sprightly Widow" (1803), John Minshull; "Independance" (1805), William Ioor; "Jonathan Postfree" (1807), L. Beach; "Tears and Smiles" (1807) and "The Indian Princess" (1808), J. N. Barker; "The Wounded Hussar" (1809),

In employing the robber *motif* Dunlap had only one predecessor, E. H. Smith, author of "Edwin and Angelina." "The Knight's Adventure," revised by Hodgkinson, probably exerted some influence in calling forth the succeeding group of robber dramas.[52]

One of Dunlap's distinct novelties was the Gothic drama, which appeared full-grown in "Fontainville Abbey," "The Knight's Adventure," and "Ribbemont." The type was soon seized upon by other Americans and frequently used.[53]

Closely allied to the Gothic drama was his most important innovation, the romantic tragedy and tragi-comedy. I have already shown that the pre-

Joseph Hutton; "The Mountain Torrent" (1820) and "The Rose of Arragon" (1822), S. B. H. Judah; "Paddy's Trip to America" (1822), Charles Talbot; "The Deed of Gift" (1822), Samuel Woodworth; "Clari" (1823), J. H. Payne; "The Saw Mill" (1824), Micah Hawkins; "The Forest Rose" (1825) and "The Widow's Son" (1825), Samuel Woodworth.

[52] Partial list of robber plays: "Rudolph" (1799?), J. D. Turnbull; "The Mysteries of the Castle" (1807), J. B. White; "Rinaldo Rinaldini" (1810), anonymous; "The Rescue" (1813), Rinaldo D'Elville; "Otho" (1819), John Neal; "The Forest of Rosenwald" (1821), J. Stokes.

[53] Partial list of Gothic plays: "Female Patriotism" (1798), John Burk; "Edwy and Elgiva" (1801), C. J. Ingersoll; "Bethlem Gabor" (1807), J. Burk; "The Mysteries of the Castle" (1807), J. B. White; "The Wood Dæmon" (1808), J. D. Turnbull; "The Orphan of Prague" (1808), Joseph Hutton; "Rinaldo Rinaldini" (1810), anonymous; "Marmion" (1812), J. N. Barker; "Otho" (1819), John Neal; "The Mountain Torrent" (1820), S. B. H. Judah; "The Forest of Rosenwald" (1821), J. Stokes; "The Forgers" (1825), J. B. White; "Hadad" (1825), J. A. Hillhouse.

vailing kind of serious play in America before 1790 was the eighteenth century form of tragedy. "Leicester" was the first protest against this tendency, and it was backed up by four romantic tragi-comedies: "Fontainville Abbey," "The Knight's Adventure," "The Archers," and "Ribbemont." These must have had some influence, inasmuch as the serious plays after 1795 as a rule discarded the conventional formula.[54]

From this analysis of his original compositions, Dunlap's place in the history of American drama is apparent. He invented no new types and conceived no new ideas, but he was a pioneer in employing several types and ideas as yet almost, or wholly, untried in this country. His important work was done in the last decade of the eighteenth century, a period of great change in our drama. The plays written in the United States between 1795 and 1830 represent a very different classification from those of the preceding thirty-five

[54] In a list of romantic dramas during the period under consideration, all the above robber and Gothic plays should be included, as well as the following titles: "Slaves in Algiers" (1794), Susannah Rowson; "The Indian Princess" (1808), J. N. Barker; "The Fortress of Sorrento" (1808) and "The Wandering Boys" (1812), M. M. Noah; "Demetria" (1813), J. A. Hillhouse; "She Would be a Soldier" (1819), M. M. Noah; "Percy's Masque" (1820), J. A. Hillhouse; "The Rose of Arragon" (1822), S. B. H. Judah; "The Grecian Captive" (1822), M. M. Noah; "The Spy" (1822), C. P. Clinch; "Ali Pacha" (1823) and "The Galley Slaves" (1823), J. H. Payne; "Superstition" (1823), J. N. Barker; "Logan" (1823), Joseph Doddridge; "La Fayette" (1824) and "The Widow's Son" (1825), Samuel Woodworth.

years, and this classification is that of Dunlap's productions. I do not mean to intimate that American dramatists consciously followed in his steps, but unquestionably he was the most conspicuous leader at the end of the century, for in every case he was among the first to try the novelty which later became the recognized convention.

But, after all, the most memorable thing about our dramatist is not that he wrote good plays or bad plays, important plays or negligible plays, but that he wrote plays at all. He had a pleasant and remunerative business; and certainly the experience of his forerunners was not such as to tempt a young man from the selling of china to the writing of dramas. His motives were love of the art and a desire to be known as a playwright. He obeyed the urge of the author's instinct at a time when authorship was not encouraged. He rejoiced in the opportunity to give his countrymen the benefit of his talent. And in recounting William Dunlap's claims to an honorable remembrance, it should not be forgotten that commercialism had no part in the making of the Father of American Drama.

CHAPTER IV

The Dramatic Translations

THE international copyright law was a product of the mid-nineteenth century. The first attempt to protect an author outside the limits of his country was made in 1837 by Prussia, but a complete system of international protection was not evolved until much later.[1] In the time of Dunlap's struggle for theatrical existence, a piece of foreign literature was the legitimate prey of any man who chose to appropriate it. Literary piracy directed against another nation was a respectable and sometimes a lucrative occupation.

This lax state of affairs proved a boon to the manager of the New York theatre. He was thereby enabled to provide his stage not only with the English favorites without cost, but also with numerous French and German novelties simply by the expenditure of the time necessary for translation. Dunlap was well aware that a play bearing the European trade-mark was much more certain of a cordial reception than a home product. Hence during the greater part of his managership he employed himself extensively in translating and presenting foreign successes. Here he found a task for which he was peculiarly fitted. Though endowed with but little originality, he yet knew stage

[1] R. R. Bowker, "Copyright, Its History and Its Law," Boston, 1912, p. 311.

technique thoroughly, and with a ready command of English and some linguistic ability, he was well equipped for dramatic remodeling. Translating for the theatre had become a frequent practice in England, and it was already slightly known in this country, but Dunlap was the earliest American to make a business of it.

I

Our author's activities as an adapter were confined chiefly to German drama, but he also drew upon France for contributions, and indeed his first translation was made from the French. Theatregoers of the United States had formed a passing acquaintance with the dramatic literature of France through occasional British renderings, such as Philips's "Distressed Mother," Hill's "Zara," and Dibdin's "Deserter," as well as a few American adaptations, especially Henry's "School for Soldiers" and Humphreys's "Widow of Malabar." Dunlap, however, gave French drama a much more conspicuous place on our stage than it had formerly possessed.

In 1797 the New York manager submitted his first effort at translation to the judgment of his patrons. When "Tell Truth and Shame the Devil" issued from the press it was accompanied with this note: "Those who are curious to know how far this comedy is original, or how far borrowed, will be satisfied by consulting a French

dramatic proverb, of one act, called JEROME POINTU." This piece by A. L. B. Robineau, who wrote under the pseudonym of "Beaunoir," was presented at Paris in 1781. *Jerome Pointu* is a licentious, avaricious, hypocritical lawyer, who discharges his free-and-easy clerk, *Leandre,* for moral irregularities. *Leandre* returns disguised and leads *Jerome* to disclose his passion for wine, women, and gaming. Over the dice-box the clerk wins all *Jerome's* possessions; then revealing himself, he offers to restore everything in exchange for the hand of his daughter. Though violently opposed to the match, the miserly lawyer is forced into the bargain.

Dunlap robbed this clever little farce of most of its effect by over-moralizing it. "Tell Truth and Shame the Devil" opens with a scene not in the original, in which *Semblance* (*Pointu* renamed) is accused by his honest partner, *Whitely* (invented by Dunlap), of all manner of abomination; thus the interest of seeing the hypocrite's character gradually exposed is destroyed. Dunlap's incorrigible honesty again led him astray at the end. The point of the French piece is entirely lost when *Semblance* refuses his consent to the engagement because of *Tom's* deception in the disguise. The American version closes with an original epilogue satirizing untruth by pretending to praise it.

Aside from the changes which I have noted and the omission of the superfluous clerk, *Blaise,* the adapter followed the French outline carefully. But he never fell into the error of rendering literally;

the play was written in colloquial and idiomatic English.

In 1799, in the midst of his Kotzebuean labors, Dunlap again turned his attention to France. This time he employed a bourgeois tragedy of some prominence, "Le Déserteur" (*c.* 1770), by Louis Sebastien Mercier. It is one of the many lacrymose plays which France produced after the invasion of sentimentalism during the first half of the eighteenth century.[2] "Le Déserteur" presents the sad history of a young man who, having deserted his regiment because of ill-treatment, is apprehended on the eve of his marriage, and is executed. The grief of the hero's newly found father adds poignancy to the tragedy.[3]

Dunlap prepared this play for his theatre as "The School for Soldiers," drawing heavily, it would seem, on "The School for Soldiers; or, The Deserter," a version made in 1783 by John Henry of the old American Company. The later translation was not published, but a comparison of the respective *dramatis personæ,* as found in Ireland, shows that Dunlap employed Henry's revised names,[4] and one easily infers that the borrowing did not stop there. The New York manager, perhaps following his predecessor's lead, domesticated

[2] See F. Gaiffe, "Le Drame en France au XVIIIe Siècle," Paris, 1910.

[3] Mercier's "Le Déserteur" is not to be confused with Sedaine's musical drama of the same name, translated by Thomas Dibdin.

[4] "Records of the New York Stage," Vol. I, pp. 79, 188.

the plot by laying the action in the time of the American Revolution.[5]

A few months later Dunlap presented "The Robbery," his adaptation of Boutet de Monvel's "Clémentine et Désormes." This sentimental drama, first performed at the Théâtre Français in 1780, had already been translated into Dutch, Italian, and Spanish. The American version was not printed, and I have been able to locate its original only through the cast of characters printed in the "Commercial Advertiser" of December 27, 1799. Monvel's play involves a hero driven from home by his stepmother, a hopeless love affair with his employer's daughter, a charge of theft and a threat of execution, a chance meeting of the long separated son and father, a complete acquittal and a touching "bless you my children."

Charles-Michel, Abbé de l'Épée, was one of the most prominent humanitarians of the eighteenth century. In 1755 he established, at his own expense, a school for the deaf and dumb, and became the founder of the modern system of instructing deaf-mutes. In 1799 Jean Bouilly wrote a play, "L'Abbé de l'Épée," wherein the philanthropist aids one of his pupils in regaining an estate of which he has been villainously deprived. Being sufficiently sentimental, the piece had a triumphant career in France,[6] and was much admired else-

[5] See "New York Gazette," February 23, 1801.
[6] Ernest Legouvé, "Soixante Ans de Souvenirs," Paris, 1887, Vol. I, p. 88.

where. Kotzebue translated it, shortly after it was written, as "Der Taubstumme; oder, Der Abbé de l'Épée." In February, 1801, Holcroft's version, "Deaf and Dumb; or, The Orphan Protected," began a successful run in London.[7] In the same year Benjamin Thompson published "Deaf and Dumb; or, The Orphan," a literal translation of Kotzebue's literal translation. Charles Smith, a New Yorker, in 1801 reprinted Thompson's rendering.

In March, 1801, Dunlap staged his own adaptation of Bouilly's play, retaining the original title. It was not published, but we know that he went to the French, and not to the German of Kotzebue.[8] A critique in the "New York Evening Post" of December 14 stated that Dunlap's piece varied considerably from its source, several new scenes being added, and certain episodes merely narrated in the French being actually represented. His alteration was pronounced an interesting, moral, and well-constructed drama.

The next borrowing from France, and the most popular, was "The Voice of Nature," based on L. C. Caigniez's "Le Jugement de Salomon" (1802). The latter, founded on the biblical episode, locates the scene in Jerusalem. *Léila,* the mother of an illegitimate child of which she had been robbed some years before, chances to recognize her offspring by means of birth-marks. She learns that

[7] Genest, Vol. VII, p. 501.
[8] "American Theatre," p. 286.

it had been stolen by *Tamira,* whose husband threatened divorce unless an heir was born. Both women loudly claiming the child, the matter is brought before *Solomon,* who orders that the boy be bisected. *Léila* proves her maternity by relinquishing her claim. *Eliphal,* the seducer of *Léila,* now makes amends in marriage.

Translated by Boaden, this play was frequently presented in England in 1802. Perceiving the tone to be quite unoriental, Boaden adroitly transplanted the events to Sicily, and to suit the new setting renamed most of the characters; thus *King Alphonso* was substituted for *Solomon, Alzira* for *Tamira,* and *Rinaldo* for *Eliphal.*

In February, 1803, Dunlap staged his version of Caigniez's drama, imitating Boaden in title, setting, and names. The American text, however, shows no indebtedness to the English. That this inferior play was a European success must be attributed partly to the peculiar appeal of its mother-and-child sentimentality. Dunlap realized that the same element would meet the hearty approval of his countrymen, and he took pains to stress it. He added an original epilogue, in which *Alzaira* declares that no woman could be so heartless as the one she has been impersonating, for the voice of nature speaks to all women alike, and they cannot but obey. What virtuous joy the translator must have experienced when the press styled his new piece one of the most affecting heart-appeals ever known![9]

[9] "New York Evening Post," February 5, 1803.

"The Voice of Nature" is of interest as the first representative of French "mélodrame" to make its appearance in the New York theatre. The "mélodrame" was a distinct type of play which developed in France from sentimental and Gothic drama at the end of the eighteenth century. The species was constructed according to a pretty definite formula; it required as the essential elements of the plot a heroine who is all virtue, a deep-dyed villain, a protector who rescues the lovely victim when her distress is at its height, and generally a humorous servant who also champions the cause of the oppressed. It was further distinguished by the use of descriptive music; the entrances, the exits, the pathetic scenes, and the tense passages were accompanied by orchestral music in keeping with the character or event. Thus the plaintive flute was made to suggest the dolor of the persecuted heroine, while the bass-viol announced the villain. Joy, surprise, suspense, despair, and divers other emotions appropriate to the action were represented by the musical score. Still other ear-marks of "mélodrame" were dances and pageants, relevantly or irrelevantly introduced; pantomime to assist in presenting the most exciting and breathless episodes; and elaborate stage decorations and mechanical devices.

The father of "mélodrame" was Guilbert de Pixerécourt, whose "Victor ou l'Enfant de la Forêt" was brought out in 1797. In his "Cœlina ou l'Enfant du Mystère," brought out in 1800, the form was seen in its completeness. The piece had

a remarkable run, and was followed by dozens of similar plays from the same pen. Another pioneer was Caigniez. His "Jugement de Salomon," which adheres to the formula with omission of the humorous element, was performed three hundred times in 1802. Thus "mélodrame" became the theatrical fashion in France, and remained so for years.

The species, with all its adornments, was introduced to England in 1802 by Thomas Holcroft's "Tale of Mystery," a translation of "Cœlina." Soon the British stage was overrun with melodramas. Novels and plays were melodramatized, and legitimate drama was almost driven from the boards.[10]

Dunlap gave New York its first taste of the new type when he submitted "The Voice of Nature" in February, 1803. But in all probability the audiences did not realize that they were witnessing a novelty, for its presentation did not differ materially from that to which they were accustomed.[11] To be sure, the music was more in evidence, but otherwise Dunlap omitted much of the melodramatic machinery, probably because he did not find it specified in the French text. New York first saw melodrama in its full glory when "A Tale of Mystery" was performed on March 16, 1803. It was advertised and reviewed as an innovation,

[10] See Paul Ginisty, "Le Mélodrame," Paris; A. H. Thorndike, "Tragedy," p. 334.

[11] It was published in 1803 as a "drama in three acts translated and altered from a French mélodrame."

and Dunlap referred to it as "the first play of the kind seen in the New World."[12] He was able to stage the piece with all the spectacular accompaniments, because Holcroft, who had seen "mélodrame" in the Parisian theatres, added to his version all necessary directions, which were left out in the French editions. "A Tale of Mystery" met the approval of New York, and served to establish melodrama as one of the popular forms.

In April, 1804, Dunlap brought out another French melodrama of his translating, Pixerécourt's "La Femme à Deux Maris." It was first acted at Paris in 1802, and was repeated hundreds of times all over France.[13] Briefly the plot is this: *Eliza Werner,* a supposed widow, is happily married to *Count de Fersen.* Her first husband, *Isadore Fritz,* a villain of the darkest hue, suddenly appears, accuses her of faking the story of his death, and demands her property. Upon discovering the existence of a previous husband, the *Count* is convinced that he and *Eliza* must separate. He offers *Fritz* a large sum for the promise of non-interference. *Fritz,* however, has designs on the whole estate. He plans an ambuscade for the *Count,* but *Bataille,* the humorous concierge, overhears, and so arranges it that the villain falls into his own trap.

Two British versions preceded Dunlap's: Miss Elizabeth Gunning's unacted "Wife with Two

[12] "American Theatre," p. 314.
[13] Ginisty, p. 71.

Husbands" (1803), a close translation; and James Cobb's free rendering of the same name, acted in 1803. The American adaptation seems to have been constructed largely from its two English precursors. In the main it is a paraphrase of Miss Gunning's text, and in places it copies her verbatim. From Cobb were taken some of the altered names, and the idea of substituting an Irishman, *Armagh,* for the Sicilian, *Bataille.* Though of miscellaneous origin, Dunlap's "Wife of Two Husbands" is a fairly effective play which does not lack for intensity in the climaxes. In its presentation, the conventions of melodrama apparently were but little observed, for it was not advertised or published as such, and aside from dances and songs the text gives no indication of the new mode of performance.

During the time when sentimentalism was a fetish, French drama was infected even down to the opéra-comique. Within this genus there was a rare species of the "purement tragique et larmoyant," to which belonged "Nina ou la Folle par Amour" (1786), by Joseph Marsollier.[14] This lugubrious affair tells the story of a girl whose father breaks her engagement with *Germieul* in consideration of a wealthier suitor. In a duel between the two wooers, *Germieul* is severely wounded and left for dead. *Nina* goes mad. In due time *Germieul* recovers and returns to an equivocal bliss with the loving but deranged *Nina.*

[14] Gaiffe, p. 479.

The sentimentalism and unusual French vogue of this opera, which had also been translated in England in 1787, induced Dunlap to attempt a version. It was brought out unsuccessfully in December, 1804, as "Nina," and was never published.

Dunlap's last translation was made from a then famous French bourgeois tragedy, written in the style of a melodrama, "Trente Ans ou la Vie d'un Joueur" (1827), by Prosper Goubaux (pseudonym "Dinaux") and Victor Ducange.[15] This violently moral play, which shows the surviving influence of Moore's "Gamester," represents three periods of a gambler's life, after successive intervals of fifteen years each. It traces his gradual downfall until he becomes a pauper, a highwayman, and a murderer. There were two British translations, "The Hut of the Red Mountain; or, Thirty Years of a Gamester's Life," and "The Gambler's Fate; or, A Lapse of Twenty Years," of which the latter began a successful run at the Park in November, 1827. In February, 1828, Dunlap's "Thirty Years; or, The Life of a Gamester," appeared at the Bowery Theatre. The American version was not published, but I have compared the manuscript at the Yale Library with the original, and have found it to be a close rendering with occasional cuttings.

[15] Legouvé, "Souvenirs," Vol. II, p. 29, called it the most popular play of the period.

II

Prior to Dunlap's labors as a translator, German drama was but scantily represented in the United States. Frederick H. Wilkens, in his monograph on the "Early Influence of German Literature in America,"[16] mentions nothing before David Rittenhouse's unacted rendering of Lessing's "Miss Sara Sampson," published at Philadelphia in 1789. The only plays on our stage before Dunlap's adaptations were Lessing's "Minna von Barnhelm" and Schiller's "Die Räuber," both performed in 1795 from British translations. Four years later the New York manager had brought the drama of Germany to a high pitch of popularity, chiefly through the meretricious charms of Kotzebue.

One of the most amazing phenomena of literature was August Friedrich Ferdinand von Kotzebue. To-day he is no more than a name. At the close of the eighteenth century he was the most famous man of letters in Europe, and his grip on immortality was commonly reckoned as sure as Shakespeare's. General attention was first attracted to him by his "Menschenhass und Reue" (1789), the success of which was overwhelming in Germany, and rendered him the public idol. With breath-taking rapidity followed some two hundred

[16] "Americana Germanica," Vol. III, p. 111.

and fifteen plays before his death in 1819.[17] After about 1800 his vogue at home waned rapidly, only a handful of his dramas retaining a place in the theatres. The chief reasons for his meteoric rise are three: First, Kotzebue was extremely skilful in producing superficial effectiveness by bizarre and exciting situations and showy characters; while, except for Schiller, there was no other German playwright at this time capable of making a popular appeal. Second, by presenting the aristocrat as vicious, the common man as the embodiment of virtue, he caught the favor of the growing spirit of democracy which had been fostered by the French Revolution. Third, he hit the taste of the time by constant use of sentimentality.

In writing bourgeois dramas of sentiment, Kotzebue was following the fashion set for Germany by Lessing when, in 1755, under the influence of Lillo and the French "comédie larmoyante," he wrote "Miss Sara Sampson." This "bürgerliche Tragoedie" met with large success, as did his sentimental comedy, "Minna von Barnhelm" (1767). Through the remainder of the century these two types prevailed. In 1784 Schiller's "Kabale und Liebe" reached the high-water mark of German bourgeois tragedy. About this time Iffland was producing a prosperous series of moral and moving comedies of every-day life. Following these examples, Kotzebue proclaimed on every occasion the two shibboleths of his day,

[17] Charles Rabany, "Kotzebue: sa Vie et son Temps," Paris, 1893; see his bibliography.

feeling and democracy, and captured his generation.

As the century ended England became as delirious with the Kotzebuean fever as Germany, and for much the same reasons. British drama was at a very low ebb; Lewis, Holcroft, Colman, and Dibdin were the best that England could claim, and these the German writer easily surpassed in the qualities that are necessary for immediate theatrical success. Kotzebue's fame across the Channel was first established by the unacted translation of "Die Negersklaven" in 1796, which made a pronounced impression because of its appropriateness to the slave agitation. Its author's career on the English stage was inaugurated at Drury Lane in 1798 by Sheridan's translation of "Menschenhass und Reue" under the title of "The Stranger." It was belauded by the majority of the papers and reviews. The "Times" declared: "Its beauties 'are not of an age, but of all times.'" It was given twenty-six performances the first season, and appeared regularly thereafter for many years. As a rival piece Covent Garden in the same year brought out "Lovers' Vows," an adaptation of "Das Kind der Liebe." It was given forty-two times this season, and continued in the London repertories until 1829. Sheridan again pressed Kotzebue into the service of his depleted finances in 1799 by presenting "Pizarro," based on "Die Spanier in Peru." During the first twelve months of its run it was given sixty-seven times, and for ten years it filled the theatre wherever and

whenever played. It went to the twenty-sixth edition in 1800. Numerous other Kotzebue dramas were brought forward during the last three years of the century, but after 1800 the German mania subsided, and only an occasional new piece was accorded a brief trial, while "The Stranger," "Lovers' Vows," and "Pizarro" alone retained a regular place in the British theatres.[18]

The following is a list of Kotzebue's plays which were translated in England, arranged approximately in the order of their introduction to the public.[19]

	Translation first acted	First published
"Die Negersklaven"		1796
"Die Indianer in England"	by 1800[20]	1796
"Menschenhass und Reue"	1798	1798
"Das Kind der Liebe"	1798	1798
"Adelheid von Wulfingen"		1798
"Der Graf von Burgund"	1799	1798
"Graf Benyowski"	1811	1798
"Die Versöhnung"	1799	1799
"Die Spanier in Peru"	1799	1799
"Die Wittwe und das Reitpferd"	1799	1799
"Der Opfertod"	1799	1799
"Armut und Edelsinn"	1799	1799
"Das Schreibepult"	1799	1799
"Die Sonnenjungfrau"	1812	1799

[18] Walter Sellier, "Kotzebue in England," Leipzig, 1901.

[19] This table is compiled from the British Museum Catalogue, Genest, and Sellier.

[20] Genest mentions no performance of it, but Anne Plumptre's translation of Kotzebue's autobiography, London, 1800, p. 380, states that it was acted at Stamford.

	Translation first acted	First published
"Die Edle Lüge"		1799
"Die Corsen"		1799
"Falsche Scham"		1799
"La Perouse"	1801	1799
"Die Silberne Hochzeit"		1799
"Die Verläumder"		1799
"Die Üble Laune"		1799
"Joanna von Montfaucon"	1800	1800
"Der Wildfang"	1800	1805
"Der Taubstumme"	1801	1801
"Der Weibliche Jacobiner-Klubb"		1801
"Die Kreuzfahrer"		1806
"Eduard in Schottland"	1808	1808
"Blind Geladen"	1812	1812
"Die Beiden Klingsberg"		1814
"Der Rehbock"	1824	....
"Die Hussiten vor Naumburg"		1830
"Die Verwandtschaften"		1837
"Die Organe des Gehirns"		1838
"Der Wirrwarr"		1842

A few specimens of the English adulation showered on Kotzebue may be of interest:

"It is no feeble symptom of interior selfishness, not to relish the general flow of his sentiments; not to glow with sympathetic rapture, while this Rousseau of the drama delineates the sweet affections and the noble sacrifices which abound among his heroes and heroines, and which are so well adapted to electrify an audience."—"Monthly Review; or, Literary Journal," Vol. XXIX, p. 102.

"The rest of the writers for the stage will do well to study the German poet; and we hope that their application may recall them from *Blue Beards* and *Spectres* to a true copy of *human life.*"—"Monthly Review; or, Literary Journal," Vol. XXVI, p. 190.

"There is, in his works, something exceedingly congenial to the cast of English character, and to the predominant tone of English sentiment. It is Shakespeare, without his quibbles, his negligences, his incongruities, his violations of the most indispensable dramatic probabilities. . . . It is Shakespeare, still endowed with all that moral wisdom which renders his works the best school of civil sagacity, and makes the deep study of them almost a perfect substitute for real experience in the varied scenes of human life."—Preface to "Self-Immolation," by Henry Neuman, 1799.

But the "German Shakespeare's" vogue did not go unchallenged. With the appearance of "The Stranger" began the activities of an opposition party headed by the Tories, the anti-revolutionists. Kotzebue's disregard for accepted religion, morals, and social rank was violently castigated. Certain of his enemies thus vented their spleen:

"Let us, for God's sake, look with a little more circumspection at the claims of these German philosophers, before we so readily admit the value of them; nor suffer the public taste to be vitiated thus, without making one single attempt to expose

the absurdity of its seducer. My blood boils with indignation when I see my beloved Shakespeare, Otway, Rowe, and all those ornaments of my native country, thrust aside, to make way for the filthy effusions of this German dunce!

"Forbid it Britons!—forbid it common sense!" —"Anti-Jacobin Review," Vol. III, p. 210.

"We wish that it was unlawful to translate them [Kotzebue's plays], except into *Coptic*, and that they were to be preserved in that language only." —"British Critic," Vol. XV, p. 431.

"When it is considered how large a quantity of *Kotzebue* we have been obliged to swallow, the reader cannot wonder at our shuddering when a fresh dose is offered to us. There is, alas! no honey around the edges of the nauseating cup." —"Monthly Review; or, Literary Journal," Vol. XXXII, p. 326.

With the Kotzebuean fad raging in Europe, William Dunlap was not slow to perceive that his best interests demanded its immediate importation to the United States. Accordingly, on December 10, 1798, the New York theatre presented to a delighted audience that great London favorite (best of recommendations), "The Stranger." Already England had been blest with three translations of "Menschenhass und Reue," Papendick's, Schinck's, and Thompson's, in addition to Sheridan's alteration for the stage, a composite of the three. The New York manager seems not to have availed himself of any of these. His German was rather

meagre for purposes of translation, but "having got possession of a wretched publication in which the plot and part of the dialogue of Kotzebue's play were given, in language neither German nor English, he wrote a play founded on these materials. . . . The author had adopted the names from the English play-bills, as well as the name by which Kotzebue's play was performed in London, and the public were at liberty to suppose that *that* which delighted them had been sanctioned by a London audience."[21]

The American "Stranger" was never published, but we may assume that it reproduced the original in outline at least. The story as told by Kotzebue is this: An anonymous misanthrope is living in seclusion. Near him dwells a woman, *Eulalia* (called *Mrs. Haller* in the English theatrical version), who passes her days in repentance for having deserted her husband years before. The *Stranger* and *Eulalia* chance to meet, and discover that they are husband and wife. After a touching renunciation, they are about to part forever, when their two small children appear and draw the forgiving pair into each other's arms.

How far New York approved of this piece of sentimentality may be gathered from a critique in the "Commercial Advertiser" of December 17, 1798: "I believe it may be asserted that this Drama is without a parallel." The novelty of its incidents, their arrangement for alternate laughter and tears, and especially its high moral tone and emotional

[21] "American Theatre," p. 253.

truth, impressed the writer as unique. "If all plays were like this, and if all audiences were equally attentive and susceptible, the question as to the usefulness of the Theatres might easily be decided; since no man who witnessed this play can hesitate a moment to admit that he came away a better man than he went." The same journal for January 17, 1800, stated that the American translation of "The Stranger" was held superior to Kotzebue's original,—high praise, indeed, for a native product.

The public appetite, whetted by its first taste of the German dramatist, soon demanded additional morsels of the same savory variety. In the words of the "Commercial Advertiser" of March 7, 1799, "To see something more from the pen of Kotzebue is now the general wish," a desire that was satisfied when Dunlap brought forward "Lovers' Vows,"—likewise the second play on the London stage.

The plot has to do with a baron who seduces a poor girl, and who in later years, being discovered and denounced by his son, is persuaded to marry the victim of his youthful folly.

The English acting version of this drama was Mrs. Inchbald's "Lovers' Vows" (1798). In the same year Stephen Porter and Anne Plumptre both translated it. Dunlap stated that his rendering was not printed,[22] but in 1814 an edition of "Lovers' Vows" was published with his name on

[22] "American Theatre," p. 261.

the title-page, and there can be little doubt that it was Dunlap's work. This edition proves to be a copy of Plumptre's "Natural Son," with a little cutting and piecing and some renaming of the characters, but with no evidence of first-hand use of Kotzebue. The "Monthly Magazine, and American Review"[23] reported that the American version was said to be Plumptre's translation fitted for a local audience by the director of the New York theatre. An extract quoted from the director's manuscript is identical with a passage in the edition of 1814, and differs in names of characters and other details from all other versions. We must conclude then that the New York edition of "Lovers' Vows" is Dunlap's, the publication of which he somehow failed to acknowledge in his stage history.

He did well to work on the basis of Plumptre's rather than Inchbald's translation, since the former possesses considerably more attractiveness of character and dialogue. By somewhat enlivening this literal rendering, he produced a play which justified the above-mentioned "Monthly Magazine," edited by Charles Brockden Brown, in congratulating New York on the superiority of its acting version to that of London. The "Commercial Advertiser" of March 12, in reviewing the play, said:

"Last evening, with curiosity alive and expectation of a renewal of that delight which the 'Stranger' had so repeatedly pour'd into the hearts

[23] Vol. I, p. 96.

of listening thousands, a crowded audience attended our Theatre to witness the first exhibition of 'Lovers' Vows,' and we will venture to say that never was so high raised curiosity so fully gratified. . . . It is a just picture of natural circumstances thrown together with exquisite skill for the purpose of painting passion and teaching virtue."

Dunlap followed up these two achievements with "Count Benyowski," of which a translation by Render had already been printed in London. The American manuscript was not published, but it was a free rendering, judging from its author's statement that "the literal translations of Count Benyowski can give no idea of the drama as prepared for the New York stage."[24] The scene of Kotzebue's play is laid in a Russian exile station whither *Benyowski,* an Austrian, has been banished. Under his leadership the exiles engage in a rebellion. The governor's daughter, with whom *Benyowski,* though married, has fallen in love, is about to accompany him in his flight, but her father entreats her to remain, and the Austrian at last relinquishes her. This heroic drama did not attain the popularity of its two predecessors.

The season's final offering in the way of adaptation from the Teutonic dramatist was "Indians in England," the reception of which was commensurate with its merits,—it was given but once, and Dunlap saw no reason for printing it. Wherefore

[24] "American Theatre," p. 261.

its relation to Alexander Thomson's translation of 1796 cannot be determined. The original plot is as vapid as a plot could be. A wealthy East Indian is on the verge of marrying an English girl when his long-lost son, the girl's lover, unexpectedly turns up, and the father steps aside.

But New York was not yet sated with German plays. The "Commercial Advertiser" of November 9, 1799, voiced the general opinion when it expressed the hope that at the reopening of the theatre the old Kotzebuean favorites might again be seen, "with the addition of such other Diamonds as the Manager may have drawn from the German mine, during the leisure of summer." The first diamond to dazzle the eager eyes was "Self-Immolation; or, The Sacrifice of Love," a translation of the atrocious "Der Opfertod." Both McKee[25] and Wegelin have included it in their bibliographies of Dunlap, but the "History of the American Theatre" makes no mention of it whatever. The *dramatis personæ*, as printed in the "Commercial Advertiser" of November 28, was identical with that of Neuman's translation published at Dublin earlier in the year under the exact title employed at New York. Dunlap always felt free to borrow from other translators, but he almost never adopted title and *dramatis personæ* without at least a slight change. Since there is nothing to indicate his authorship, it seems evident that the New York

[25] Thomas J. McKee's introduction to "The Father," No. 2 of Publications of the Dunlap Society, 1887, contains a list of Dunlap's plays.

acting version of "Self-Immolation" was in reality Neuman's.

The support of the Park Theatre in 1799–1800 was "False Shame; or, The American Orphan in Germany," a serious comedy built around the idea that a false sense of delicacy, which prevents entire confidence between husbands and wives or lovers, is the cause of much unhappiness. An anonymous adaptation of "Falsche Scham" was printed in London in 1799, but Dunlap was under no obligation to it. On this occasion he essayed an entirely independent rendering, with such results as might have been expected from a translator who was unused to trusting himself alone. His play is closely literal and often stiffly German in its idioms. It reproduces all the wordiness of the original, much of which might well be spared. Because of its too great fidelity it is one of our author's less satisfactory translations. But the plot is interesting if shallow, and the comedy was well received by the public and warmly praised by the critics.

There is no evidence that Dunlap's version was ever published, although two editions have been ascribed to him, one printed at Charleston in 1800 and the other at New York in the same year. Both, however, prove to be exact reprints of the anonymous London play. Only one other American edition is known, and it bears the name of Charles Smith.[26]

[26] For the text of Dunlap's translation, I have consulted the manuscript in the Brown University Library.

Perhaps the most skilful and independent of Dunlap's adaptations was "The Wild Goose Chace," acted early in 1800,—the first rendering of "Der Wildfang" into the English language to appear on any stage. It is a brisk farce, chiefly composed of the tricks by which *Frederick,* an amorous youth of one and twenty, attempts to woo and win *Nannette,* the daughter of an old dragon, *Madam Brumbach.* After a series of entertaining escapades, *Frederick* discovers that his tutor is the father of *Nannette,* and from him he gains permission to marry.

This is another instance in which Dunlap did not rely on a previous translation for assistance, yet never did he do better work. He followed the German plot closely, and always reproduced the intention of the author, but by a free textual rendering he enlivened and adorned a rather bare comedy. Kotzebue's terrific rate of composition often resulted in sketchiness and lack of finish. Dunlap in this instance expanded the hasty dialogue, adding spice and humor, and rounding out some of the characters. *Baron Piffleburg,* pursued by *Madam Brumbach,* especially profited in the alteration. From a somewhat meagre figure he became a distinct personality, a good acting part. Again, the shadowy hair-dresser was made a humorous Frenchman with a strong Gallic accent. Another change was the insertion of several songs without warrant from Kotzebue, a liberty often taken with him on the English stage.[27] Dunlap's pur-

[27] A. H. Thorndike, "Tragedy," p. 332.

pose throughout was theatrical effectiveness, and he succeeded unusually well.

"Der Wildfang" was also translated sometime in 1800 by Charles Smith, and printed as "The Wild Youth." Smith has already been mentioned in this chapter, so a word concerning him will be in place here. He was a New York bookseller and editor who set out to translate the whole of Kotzebue, but after laboring through three plays his zeal abated and he relapsed into reprinting London editions.[28] Surely a more incompetent person never tortured foreign literature into the English language. His method was to reproduce the author with excruciating literalness, as a few clauses from the play under discussion will show: "I am with her but three weeks," "the second is run away," "she is beautiful like a rose," "just by that the soonest." From such a rival Dunlap had nothing to fear.

Apparently the only British adaptation of the

[28] F. H. Wilkens, "Americana Germanica," Vol. III, p. 125. According to Mr. Wegelin's "Early American Plays," Smith's translations and reprints are these: "Count of Burgundy" (1798; however, the "Monthly Magazine," Vol. II, p. 135, said his first translation was made in 1800), "Self-Immolation" (1800), "The Wild Youth" (1800), "La Perouse" (1800), "The Virgin of the Sun" (1800), "Adelaide of Wulfingen" (1800), "The Force of Calumny" (1800), "The Happy Family" (1800), "Pizarro" (1800), "The East Indian" (1800), "Indigence and Nobleness of Mind" (1800), "The Widow and the Riding Horse" (1800), "False Shame; or, The American Orphan in Germany" (1800), "Abbé de l'Épée; or, The Orphan" (1801), "Fraternal Discord" (1801), "The Writing Desk" (1801), "The Beautiful Unknown" (1803).

piece was "Of Age Tomorrow," a musical entertainment by Thomas Dibdin, first acted on February 1, 1800, and printed in 1805. It is a free and unsatisfactory version, the last act having been entirely omitted.

Dunlap's success was acknowledged by the critics. The "Commercial Advertiser" of January 25, 1800, favorably compared "The Wild Goose Chace" with the best English farces and comic operas, adding that it was enthusiastically received by an audience constantly convulsed with laughter. The "Monthly Magazine" pronounced this alteration more enjoyable than the original, and much superior to Smith's. His "is far too literal a version, and its language too flat and vulgar to afford us any pleasure in the perusal. . . . Mr. Dunlap is more bold and free; but this freedom is under the guidance of sound discretion. His experience, as director of the Theatre, has enabled him to discern what would be most acceptable, and to adapt his translation to the opinion and taste of the public."[29] But this article made one of the early protests against Kotzebue when it advised the pruning of the faulty opinions, the vulgarity and immorality of the German dramatist.

About two weeks after the *première* of "The Wild Goose Chace," "The Force of Calumny," adapted by Dunlap from "Die Verläumder," was performed. It presents a pathetic picture of the suspicion engendered and the misery endured

[29] Vol. III, p. 226.

through malicious lying. In the end, of course, the misunderstanding is removed, and the calumniator punished. The play was not known on the English stage, but in 1799 Anne Plumptre published a translation, which Charles Smith reprinted in 1800. What relation Dunlap's version bore to the English cannot be determined, since his was not printed. Its vogue was not equal to that of several kindred efforts, yet the declaration of the "Commercial Advertiser" on February 7, 1800, that no play of Kotzebue's was so uniformly interesting, would indicate that it found admirers at its first appearance.

A second translation to which Dunlap's title is not clear is "The Count of Burgundy," first acted in March, 1800. It is not mentioned in the "History of the American Theatre," but Ireland, McKee, and Wegelin have attributed it to him. Identity of *dramatis personæ*[30] suggests that the American stage version was Plumptre's rendering, somewhat altered, perhaps, by the New York manager. I suppose the point cannot be determined with certainty, and the inferiority of the original makes it a matter of little importance. "Der Graf von Burgund" deals with the time-honored theme of a youth raised in obscurity, who turns out to be the heir to a throne. It was censured by the "Monthly Magazine" for its wearisomeness and its lack of art and ingenuity.[31]

[30] See "Commercial Advertiser," March 3, 1800, for the New York cast.

[31] Vol. II, pp. 133 ff.

One of Dunlap's most popular adaptations from the German was "The Virgin of the Sun," brought out in the spring of 1800. The year before, three versions had been published in London: Plumptre's, Thompson's, and Lawrence's; it did not appear on the English stage, however, until 1812. In 1800 Lawrence's rendering was reprinted by Charles Smith. Our author's play was constructed from the original with the help of Plumptre's literal translation. The latter guided him throughout the task, but in only two places did he appropriate entire sections verbatim. He copied the last of Act II and the first of Act III, the best portions of her work.

The events of the drama occur among the sun-worshipers of Peru. *Cora,* a virgin of the sun, is loved by *Rolla,* a native, and *Alonzo,* a Spaniard. For *Alonzo* she has broken her vow of chastity, and is about to become a mother. *Rolla,* convinced of their love, relinquishes his claims and promises to be as a brother. When the high priestess discovers *Cora's* plight she threatens her with living burial, but *Cora* is sure that she has done no wrong in thus obeying the voice of nature. The guilty pair are placed on trial before the king and priests. A sentence of death is about to be pronounced, when *Rolla* rushes in with a band of followers to enforce mercy. *Cora* persuades him to lay down his arms, whereupon the king pardons all the offenders.

Dunlap's main alterations of both Kotzebue and Plumptre were an occasional rearrangement of

episodes, and—a feature praised by Genest[32]—a generous cutting of the long-winded verbiage which frequently retards the action and dulls the interest. It is no exaggeration to say that the play thus produced was more likely to go well than Kotzebue's or Plumptre's. Such was the opinion of his contemporaries. The "Monthly Magazine" spoke as follows:

"The language of passion which he [*Rolla*] utters, sometimes borders, perhaps, on extravagance; but this is less discernible in the play of Mr. D. than in the original. In the former will be found but few of those faults in style and sentiment which occur in the more literal and faithful translations. . . . The minuter differences of expression, by which the original is softened and chastized, are too many to be particularized, and render the production of Mr. D., to an English reader, superior to other translations."[33]

There is reason to believe that Dunlap's printed version was not the one which first appeared at the Park Theatre. The "Commercial Advertiser" of March 15, 1800, called the stage play Miss Plumptre's, and correctly, I think. There is at the New York Society Library a copy of her translation, altered as a prompt-book in Dunlap's unmistakable penmanship. Considerable portions are cut and new renderings are freely substituted. It would seem that the manager doctored up

[32] Vol. VIII, p. 290.
[33] Vol. II, p. 367.

Plumptre in his haste to present another German novelty; then during the next two weeks he revised and improved his alteration, and sent it to the press.

Just two weeks after the *première* of "The Virgin of the Sun," its sequel, "Pizarro in Peru; or, The Death of Rolla," was performed at the Park. It soon gained almost as much of a hold in America as it had in England, where at least four different translations were printed in 1799: Sheridan's, Dutton's, Lewis's, and Plumptre's. At New York, sometime in 1800, Smith published his "Pizarro," practically a copy of Sheridan.

Dunlap's play was in the main a revision of Sheridan's very free adaptation, and approximately a third of the text was even copied directly from him.

The story as told by Dunlap is substantially faithful to Kotzebue. *Pizarro,* a heartless Spanish conqueror, is invading Peru accompanied by *Elvira,* his mistress. *Alonzo* and *Rolla,* with other Peruvians, prepare to resist. *Alonzo* is captured by the Spaniards and imprisoned to await death, but *Rolla* succeeds in freeing him. As the Peruvian is leaving the camp, he spies the child of *Cora* and *Alonzo* in the hands of the Spanish soldiers. Seizing the infant, he flees amid a shower of bullets, and escapes, with a fatal wound in his side. He reaches the retreat of the distracted pair, restores the child and dies. Thus Kotzebue ended the play. Sheridan added thrills by shortening

this scene and annexing a combat between *Alonzo* and *Pizarro,* who suddenly rushes in and is slain, thanks to the intervention of *Elvira.* Dunlap wisely omitted Sheridan's last scene, and restored the author's closing lines, which he designated as "sublime." The New York version imitated Sheridan in placing on the stage instead of behind the scenes the spectacular flight with the child, in eliminating much of Kotzebue's superfluous wordiness, and in amplifying the sentimental passages.

The "Monthly Magazine," in reviewing Dunlap's "Pizarro," made this comment:

"We have not, in the present instance, any reason to detract from the praise we have before bestowed on this gentleman as an able and judicious translator. His views being directed to the stage, he has been particularly careful to adapt his play for a popular exhibition. He has cut out many passages that render the dialogue heavy and tiresome, or which seemed liable to weaken the dramatic effect of the scenes." He is commended for "adhering to his author in the conclusion of the play, which is greatly weakened by the change introduced in that of Mr. Sheridan."[34]

Judging from the success of the last two dramas, the New York playgoers were as enthusiastic over the German wonder as ever. The folk behind the footlights, however, were tiring of the incessant Kotzebue. In the words of the harassed manager,

[34] Vol. III, p. 454.

"those plays which attracted the public, and gave bread to some and means of destructive indulgence to others, were stigmatized by the actors as *Dutch stuff*, and by other epithets equally characteristic."[35]

The next two or three dramas failed to receive the support accorded to their predecessors—perhaps an indication that the public was beginning to agree with the actors. On April 21, 1800, "The Corsicans" made its bow in a version of dubious origin. McKee and Wegelin have called it Dunlap's, but it is not mentioned in the "American Theatre," and Ireland does not suggest a translator. The drama was not acted in England, but an anonymous rendering was printed at London in 1799, which Dunlap may have employed, with alterations, on the stage of the Park Theatre.

Two days after "The Corsicans," "The Stranger's Birthday," a sequel to "The Stranger," was performed. It was rendered from "Die Edle Lüge," already translated in England by Maria Geisweiler as "The Noble Lie." Again Kotzebue presented the *Stranger*—now called *Baron Meinau*—and *Eulalia*. She still suffers remorse for her early sin, and feels herself unworthy of her husband. To comfort her, he deceives her into believing that he has seduced the servant girl. Inadvertently learning the truth, she is deeply touched by his nobility, and presumably banishes

[35] "American Theatre," p. 276.

her self-contempt. Dunlap's version of this inexcusable play was never printed.

That Kotzebue was no longer swallowed whole was more than hinted in a comment in the "Commercial Advertiser" of May 19, 1800:

"Our stage has been so inundated of late, I had almost said disgraced, with the wretched productions of the Holcrofts, the Reynoldses, the Mortons, the Kotzebues (the exception of some few plays) and a tribe of other such writers, that it is high time to make a stand against a torrent which threatens to vitiate not only taste but morals."

The last new German drama of the season was "The Happy Family," rendered from "Die Silberne Hochzeit." McKee has attributed this title to the New York manager in spite of his definite statement that it was "an English version" which he staged.[36] In the Society Library, among a number of plays signed by Dunlap, there are two copies of Thompson's rendering of "The Happy Family" as reprinted by Charles Smith. One copy bears the words "Cut for the part of Lewis" in Dunlap's hand; the other, apparently the prompt-book, is greatly reduced and altered, with occasional textual changes, all in the manager's penmanship. I think the conclusion is obvious that "The Happy Family" must be omitted from our translator's bibliography.

[36] "American Theatre," p. 282.

Early in the fall season of 1800 "Fraternal Discord," another novelty from the prolific pen of Kotzebue, won the approbation of the public. London was already familiar with the play through Ludger's unacted translation, printed in 1799 as "The Reconciliation; or, The Birth-Day," and through Dibdin's "Birth-Day," acted in 1799 and printed in 1800.

"Die Versöhnung" is among the sanest efforts of the Teutonic dramatist. It presents a rather pleasing picture of middle-class life. Two elderly brothers have been engaged for fifteen years in a lawsuit with each other over a garden. *Philip* is an impoverished consumptive with a daughter, *Charlotte*. *Franz* is a well-to-do bachelor, an ex-sea captain. *Charlotte* and her lover, *Philip's* doctor, finally effect a reconciliation.

"Fraternal Discord" is as completely his own as any of Dunlap's Kotzebuean adaptations. There is some evidence that he was familiar with Ludger's version, but he borrowed almost nothing from it, and his result differs materially from this stiffly literal rendering. Dibdin's play is a radical alteration to which he was even less indebted. "Fraternal Discord" may then be considered an independent translation, and a very skilful one. Some of the weaker scenes and more unnecessary dialogue are omitted, and the whole is clad in a garb of colloquial, natural English, producing a smoothly idiomatic play. The "Monthly Magazine," while decrying the London versions as stupid and mutilated, said:

"*Fraternal Discord* is a translation from Kotzebue's *Versöhnung, oder Bruder's Twist,* by Mr. Dunlap, and is, in our opinion, one of the most pleasing pieces of that popular author. Its plot is simple, yet sufficiently abounding in incident; its moral is excellent, and its dialogue appropriate and elegant. . . . The manager, in his translation, appears to have done justice to the original, and to have retained a due regard for the English language, and the taste of his audience."[37]

Dunlap himself considered it "perhaps the most meritorious of the many translations and alterations which came from his pen."[38]

New York received the play most cordially, and yet divers intelligent people were beginning to wonder whether, after all, Kotzebue would rank with the immortals. One writer thus expressed it:

"No dramatist appears to have gained so sudden and extensive a reputation as Kotzebue. No other has been able to command the united suffrages of distant and different nations in his favour. Centuries have elapsed before an author has been much, or generally, known out of his native country. His performances may be read by the few; but to be translated into different languages, and usurp the place of native productions on the theatres of other nations, is a destiny extraordinary and unprecedented. . . . But popular favour is capricious, and it may be fairly questioned whether

[37] Vol. III, p. 380.
[38] "American Theatre," p. 281.

the fame of this dramatist rests on a solid basis, or bids fair to be as durable as it is great; whether he is to excite our wonder, and pass like a brilliant meteor, or to remain a fixed luminary in the literary horizon. There is sometimes a fashion in the prevailing opinions of the world, in the matters of literature and science, as well as in dress and equipage; and the present *teutonick* fashion of writing may be as transient as any other kind."[39]

The final German translation that Dunlap gave to the New York stage was "The Blind Boy." It was taken from "Das Epigramm," a sentimental comedy in which a young doctor, who has incurred the hostility of a very self-important woman, makes amends by restoring the sight of her blind son. Once more the adapter worked independently, for the play had not been, and was not to be, translated in England. How well he performed his task I cannot say, since the drama seems never to have been printed.[40] The fact that "The Blind Boy" was presented only a very few times does not indicate that it was inferior to its predecessors, but that New York had lost its zest for Kotzebue.

[39] "Monthly Magazine," Vol. III, p. 453.

[40] Dunlap said nothing as to its publication; Wegelin states ("Bibliographical Checklist of the Plays and Miscellaneous Writings of William Dunlap," No. 26) that it was printed in 1808, but his description: "A Melo-Drama, in two acts, pp. 40," corresponds exactly with W. B. Hewetson's original "Blind Boy," London, 1808, and does not fit a translation of Kotzebue's four-act domestic comedy.

"La Perouse" was Dunlap's sole adaptation not to appear in the theatre. That he translated the piece we know from its inclusion in his bibliography and in the prospectus of his selected plays; but when he did so, or why it was not acted, there is no way of determining. "La Perouse" was well known in London. Renderings by Plumptre and Thompson were printed in 1799; early in 1801 J. Fawcett's pantomime, based on the play, made something of a sensation; and later in the year Thompson's version was performed.[41] But not until 1811 did this drama of life on a desolate island reach the New York stage, and then only in the pantomimic form.

Though Dunlap was the adapter of the majority of Kotzebue's plays seen at the Park Theatre, yet other translators were also represented, for any satisfactory rendering was welcome. During his managership the following translations from the German dramatist were given:

	First acted	Translator
"The Stranger"	December 10, 1798	Dunlap
"Lovers' Vows"	March 11, 1799	Dunlap
"Count Benyowski"	April 1, 1799	Dunlap
"Indians in England"	June 14, 1799	Dunlap

[41] Sellier, pp. 73, 75.

	First acted	Translator
"Self-Immolation"	November 29, 1799	Neuman (?)
"False Shame"	December 11, 1799	Dunlap
"The Wild Goose Chace"	January 24, 1800	Dunlap
"The Force of Calumny"	February 5, 1800	Dunlap
"The Count of Burgundy"	March 3, 1800	Uncertain
"The Virgin of the Sun"	March 12, 1800	Dunlap
"Pizarro"	March 26, 1800	Dunlap
"Sighs; or, The Daughter"	April 16, 1800	Hoare
"The Corsicans"	April 21, 1800	Uncertain
"The Stranger's Birthday"	April 23, 1800	Dunlap
"The Horse and the Widow"	May 5, 1800	Dibdin
"Joanna of Montfaucon"	May 28, 1800	Cumberland
"The Wise Man of the East"	May 30, 1800	Inchbald
"The Happy Family"	June 2, 1800	Thompson
"Fraternal Discord"	October 24, 1800	Dunlap
"The Blind Boy"	March 30, 1803	Dunlap

We see that the New York director brought out twenty plays, against only fourteen on the London stage during the corresponding period. It may occasion some surprise that Dunlap, with his high ambition for a moral and elevating theatre, should thus have thrown the doors of his establishment open to a dramatist who disregarded the most fundamental precepts of accepted morality. Perhaps the German's democratic principles so often enunciated, and his sentimentalism so constantly flaunted, blinded the eyes of the American manager; perhaps Kotzebue's iconoclasm appealed to him in this period of Godwinian discipleship; perhaps he connived somewhat at the objectionable qualities in consideration of his pocket-book. It should be said, however, that he expurgated as much as possible, and left some of the most prurient plays untranslated.

Though greatly admiring Kotzebue, Dunlap never idolized him, if his opinion was accurately reflected in the works written in after years. Neither did he denounce him as many did when the novelty had worn off. From the "History of the American Theatre" I quote: "Kotzebue is far beneath many of the German dramatists." "Kotzebue's great talent was facility of invention; his incidents are admirable; his delineation of character is often fine; but many of his characters partake of the age in which he lived, and of his own false philosophy and false estimate of the foundation on which society ought to rest."[42] In the

[42] pp. 254, 258.

"Memoirs of Cooke," after condemning the English playwrights who tried to put down German literature, and the English translators who "succeeded in darkening its brightness by a most thick, and sometimes impenetrable, fogginess," he went on to say: "As my admiration of the German dramatists was not founded on the praise of the English writers, so my opinion has not been shaken by their censure."[43]

The years of the Kotzebue fever in America were 1799 and 1800. The inoculation took place in December, 1798, and shortly the epidemic was raging. During 1799, out of approximately one hundred playing nights, at least thirty performances of Kotzebue were advertised; and in 1800, out of about one hundred and twenty-five nights, he held the boards at least fifty times. The next year started briskly with eight performances in January, but the German onslaught met a sudden and final check, for the remainder of 1801 saw but a dozen or so exhibitions of Teutonic drama, and 1802 sank to four or five. Thereafter the "second Shakespeare" was represented only by an occasional performance of "The Stranger," "Pizarro," "Lovers' Vows," or "Fraternal Discord," the four plays which retained the most persistent hold on the New York stage. This sudden slump in the career of the reigning favorite was the result of a similar catastrophe in London, the fashion-maker of New York, and of a perfectly natural reaction against the superficiality and falseness that had just been so eagerly applauded.

[43] Vol. I, pp. 276–7.

During the fat years Kotzebue held a very prominent place in the newspapers and magazines of the city. Each new piece was heralded before, and lauded after, its appearance. Each performance was reviewed with praise or blame for the actors as they reached or missed the author's heights. The English adulation of the great dramatist was reprinted, and biographical notices concerning him were frequently inserted. Besides the translations by Dunlap and Smith, various British versions of his plays and a few of his novels and other writings were published in New York. The German invasion, however, as we have seen, was not accomplished without some resistance. New York did not develop an opposition party as London did, but individual expressions of disapproval were not lacking, and these became increasingly prominent as time went on.

It is not to be assumed that New York was the only city in the United States in which Kotzebue was the dramatic hero. His plays reached Philadelphia shortly after their introduction to America, and between 1799 and 1802 they practically dominated the stage. "False Shame," "The Wild Goose Chace," and probably others of Dunlap's translating were given.[44] In the Boston theatre also the German playwright was well represented. Dunlap spoke of "Count Benyowski" and other adaptations of his being acted there in the fall of

[44] C. F. Brede, "German-American Annals," new series, Vol. III, p. 265; see same writer and journal, new series, Vol. X, pp. 106–149, for a discussion of Kotzebue on the Philadelphia stage.

1799. "Pizarro," admirably brought out in 1800, had a long and successful run.[45] Charleston witnessed a few of the dramas, including "Fraternal Discord," in 1803–4,[46] and probably this was not their first season at that place. It is to be noted that wherever Kotzebue's works were acted, Dunlap was to some extent the purveyor thereof.

The effect of this craze on American drama was less than one might have expected from its magnitude. The plays known to this country were of two main types: dramas centered about protagonists and dealing with remote times and places, such as "Pizarro," "Benyowski," and "Adelaide of Wulfingen"; and semi-realistic dramas of contemporary life, like "The Stranger," "Self-Immolation," and "Fraternal Discord." Perhaps fewer examples of the first type could be found in our literature after 1800 than before, and those few were as much indebted to Schiller as to Kotzebue. The second had been one of the prevailing types in America since Tyler's "Contrast" in 1787. Kotzebue's favorite *motifs,* sentimentality and discovery of kinship, were much used here years before "The Stranger's" advent. The Kotzebuean species of sentimentality which arose from affecting pictures of family life, was never much employed by our dramatists, who preferred the distressed-lover theme. The German writer's influence, then, consisted more in confirming certain

[45] "American Theatre," p. 273; W. W. Clapp, "A Record of the Boston Stage," p. 74.
[46] "American Theatre," pp. 369–70.

tendencies already existent in this country, than in introducing any new ones.

As a final word on Kotzebue in America, it may be well to point to the fact that his vogue here was almost simultaneous with his fame abroad, and by completing the circle of his triumphs gave him a distinction never before achieved by a man of letters. Whereas other writers had gained a foreign standing gradually, if at all, and usually not till after their death, he leaped, almost at one bound, into a place of the first literary importance in all the leading countries of the world. This remarkable accomplishment was the result of his unquestioned theatrical skill, his sentimentality, and his revolutionary ideas. In this country his political philosophy was especially congenial to the Republican party, then rising into power. But perhaps the main cause of his popularity in the United States was the furore which he created on the other side of the Atlantic.

III

Kotzebue was not the only German dramatist of whom Dunlap made capital. Having profited by these labors, in 1799 he turned his attention to Schiller. "The Robbers" was his only play known on our stage, and it was not at all well known. It was first given at New York in 1795 and not repeated until 1798, so far as I have discovered.[47]

[47] See *ante*, p. 162; "Commercial Advertiser," June 7, 1798.

Dunlap's translation of "Don Carlos," acted in May, 1799, did not enhance Schiller's reputation in the United States; it was not a sufficient success to warrant repetition or publication. This tremendously long drama on Spanish history seems scarcely adapted to the taste and habits of an American audience. Dunlap curtailed it, so he has told us, and probably it lost much of its original force in the process. Thanks to adapter and actors, the play "was unmercifully shorn of its beams."[48] "Don Carlos" was not known to the English stage, but two adaptations were printed in England in 1798, of which the New York manager may have made some use.

Three years later "Fiesco" was given at the Park. McKee attributed the translation to Dunlap, but there is no proof that this is correct. His statement is merely: "On the 26th of March, 1802, Schiller's Fiesco was performed (Cooper playing Fiesco); it was coldly received."[49] A copy of the drama in German was included in Dunlap's library, and he at one time translated a portion of it,[50] but we do not know that he ever finished it. Perhaps the New York version was an abbreviation of the rendering made in English in 1796.

The "Monthly Magazine" for December, 1800, contained this notice: "We understand that the Manager is preparing for the stage, a German

[48] "American Theatre," p. 262.
[49] *Ibid.*, p. 294.
[50] Diary, Vol. XV, pp. 66–7.

drama, called *Abaellino,* which, in sublimity, is thought superior to the *Robbers,* and in its *dénouement* to exceed the *Stranger.*"[51] Early the next year this dramatic gem appeared. First written as a novel in 1793 by Johann Heinrich Daniel Zschokke, "Abällino der Grosse Bandit" was soon dramatized by him and published in 1795. Within a short time it was to be seen in most of the theatres of Germany. Its international career was long and brilliant. Translations were made into Dutch, French, Spanish, Polish, Danish, and English, and in various disguises it was acted all over Europe.[52]

Dunlap was the first to turn "Abällino" into English. The earliest British versions were those of M. G. Lewis and R. W. Elliston, both made in 1805. Unfortunately I have failed to find a copy of the German play (except a later poetic revision) in this country; hence I have been unable to compare the translation with the original. But probably the American adapter adhered fairly closely to the text, as his custom was.

In the New York edition the plot is this: *Abaellino,* a bravo, is terrorizing Venice by his assassinations. Great efforts are made to capture him, but without success. *Flodoardo,* a young Venetian in love with *Rosamonda,* the Doge's niece, assumes the task of exterminating *Abaellino.* But the bandit's outrages continue, many prominent

[51] Vol. III, p. 456.
[52] J. P. Hoskins, "Publications of the Modern Language Association," Vol. XX, p. 283.

citizens falling under his dagger. Finally at a State reception, *Abaellino* suddenly appears, and whisking off his horrible mask, reveals the handsome *Flodoardo*. Then he points out the conspirators for whose detection he had assumed the manner and disguise of a bravo, mysteriously produces his supposed victims, and receives the hand of *Rosamonda*.

This wildly extravagant affair met the entire approval of New York, as well as of numerous other American cities where it was played.

One of the least successful of the German adaptations was "Peter the Great; or, The Russian Mother," which came out in the fall of 1802. It was based on "Die Strelizen," written in 1790 by Joseph Marius Babo. The play concerns itself with a conspiracy of the Strelitz[53] against Peter the Great. The plot is discovered, and the young leader is about to be executed, but his mother prevails upon the Czar to spare him.

As usual, Dunlap's version carefully followed the outlines of the original, though with judicious compression of the dialogue, and without any attempt at literal translation. Some of the difficult Russian names were simplified—for instance, *Prostoserdof* was changed to *Orloff*—and one or two minor characters were expanded, especially

[53] The Strelitz was a body of troops which formed the greater part of the Russian army in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. They were brave in battle, but so given to mutiny in peace that Peter the Great abolished the force.

the indefinitely foreign officer, who became at his hands a debonair Frenchman. In short, Dunlap altered "Die Strelizen" into a somewhat Americanized drama in easy and flexible English. Its lack of popularity in New York is not surprising, because the original has but little theatrical possibility.

The shortest of the foreign renderings is "The Good Neighbor; An Interlude in One Act. Altered from a scene of Iffland's." It centers about a kindly old man who serves as a sort of community mediator and peace-maker. I have been unable to locate the play of Iffland's from which the sketch was taken. "Nachbarschaft" is immediately suggested by the title, but I find no resemblance in subject-matter. Probably Dunlap took the idea from a portion of one of Iffland's dramas, and worked it up to suit himself.

Considering Dunlap's translations as a whole, we find much of that dependence on the work of others which characterized his original plays. Not more than one third of his adaptations were made without the authority of previous British versions. Much as he deplored the partiality of America for the literature of Great Britain, he found it expedient to follow that literature as a standard. In the case of Kotzebue it was his usual practice to bring forward on the New York stage those dramas which made the greatest sensation in London, though occasionally he anticipated the

English *première*. This adherence to foreign precedent, however, was not solely the result of mental dependence on Dunlap's part; it was rather the most satisfactory solution of a very difficult problem. Given a theatre rushing toward bankruptcy and an audience prejudiced in favor of the London product, self-preservation required that London be taken as the model. If often Dunlap's dependence was not confined to the choice of the play, but involved also textual borrowing, it should be attributed to imperative haste and not to incapacity. When he set himself to the task he could make an independent translation equal to any of his English rivals, as "The Wild Goose Chace" and "Fraternal Discord" clearly show.

Dunlap's merits as a translator were of no mean order. He always held the author's intention in respect, yet he almost never fell into the error of rendering literally. By reproducing the ideas in facile, conversational English, by cutting redundancies, and by amplifying undeveloped spots,—in a word, by applying his knowledge of stage requirements to another writer's material, he often constructed a play equaling or surpassing the original.

The service of William Dunlap to American literature through his translations was intangible, but real none the less. Before 1799 America had but the barest acquaintance with the drama of the Continent. England held the boards to the exclusion of other nations. For the dramatic literature of France and Germany Dunlap made a

large place on the stage of New York, and called it strongly to the attention of other cities where his adaptations were acted and his example imitated. Thus he helped give the United States a more cosmopolitan view of contemporary culture. Though the plays which he exploited were of little permanence, yet they aided in establishing literary intercourse between America and Europe. Two immediate results of this heightened interest in foreign drama were the greatly increased popularity of Schiller in this country after 1800, and the work of John Howard Payne as a translator of French plays.

If Dunlap played some part in lessening the provincialism of the United States in its youth, and in broadening its outlook on the world of letters, surely he deserves our respect and gratitude as a contributor to our literary development.

CHAPTER V

The Non-Dramatic Writings

NOBODY reads Dunlap's plays to-day, and nobody visits an art museum to see his pictures. These products belonged to the age which gave them being, and with it they passed away. But a third phase of his work still retains an importance that it will not soon lose. It is as an investigator and recorder of facts that he possesses a present-day value. He knew some interesting people of his generation; he was a leader in various activities; he was a close observer of all that went on about him, as well as a careful student of that which had preceded. Of the things he knew best, he wrote, and we are yet indebted to him for having done so.

I

The "Memoirs of the Life of George Frederick Cooke" had its place in the development of American biography. In order to understand its significance, we must look at a few early examples of this department of our literature. Among the first attempts at memoir writing was John Norton's "Life and Death of that deservedly famous man of God, Mr. John Cotton," published in 1658. As the title suggests, it was more sermon than biography; the narrative of John Cotton's life was

used as a vehicle for a great deal of moralizing. Nothing like a well-rounded picture of the man was given, for the emphasis was wholly on the religious aspects. The formula employed by John Norton prevailed for over a century. Cotton Mather, Samuel Mather, Ebenezer Turrell, and other biographers wrote in the laudatory, didactic, and one-sided manner of their forerunner.

By 1800 the method was beginning to undergo a change. One of the first memoirs of the nineteenth century was Weems's "Life of Washington." To be sure, Weems exalted his hero to the clouds, and never lost an opportunity to point a moral, even as his predecessors had done; but in laying greater stress on private life and general affairs, he took a forward step. Another tendency, almost entirely absent previously, is well illustrated in Cheetham's "Life of Thomas Paine" (1809)—a tendency to disregard the doctrine of "de mortuis nil nisi bonum." Indeed, Cheetham's book is a scathing denunciation of Paine's character and deeds.

The "Memoirs of Cooke" was a joint product of the older and newer methods. Like the pious biographies of the eighteenth century it aimed to serve the cause of morality; but, decidedly unlike them, it did so, not by detailing the blameless career of a devout clergyman, but by frankly revealing the errors of a dissipated actor. If the moral purpose was inherited from the past, the subject-matter was of the newer and less idolatrous school, for we hear less praise of Cooke's majestic

acting than condemnation of his inebriety. This means that the picture is not so one-sided as in the earlier biographies. In them we saw only the preacher or the ideal Christian; in this we see the actor and the man, the genius and the brute. The Philadelphia "Port Folio" spoke truly when it said of Dunlap: "He deserves the thanks of his countrymen for making so bold and intrepid a stand in favour of legitimate biography."[1]

In writing the "Memoirs," Dunlap relied for his information on Cooke's rather fragmentary diaries, and on his own acquaintance with him. From these sources he strung out an 800-page narrative, which probably was not considered too long in that leisurely, two-volume age. The first volume and about a third of the second are taken up with the player's English career; the remainder presents a detailed review of his two years in America. We are given some idea of that indescribable thing, a great actor's mode of acting. We are introduced to his manner of life and his opinions on various subjects. We are offered lengthy extracts from his journals. We are entertained with numberless anecdotes. Entirely too much space is devoted to gossip and scandal. The reader is not particularly edified by an account of each of the player's debauches. Indeed, Dunlap's zeal for temperance may have led him to exaggerate Cooke's alcoholic excesses, or to give them a semblance of greater frequency than was consistent with the truth. Some of Cooke's associates,

[1] Third series, Vol. I, p. 554.

especially W. B. Wood and J. W. Francis, have testified that the biographer presented an unjust picture of the actor.[2] It is to be regretted that he did not omit some of the gossipy padding, and substitute a discussion of the conditions in the American theatre at this period.

The "Memoirs of Cooke" is not Dunlap's most excellent production. It is, however, interesting reading, it is our main source of information about a distinguished player, and it is something of a landmark in the development of impartial biography.

One of the most pleasant friendships among early American men of letters was that of Charles Brockden Brown and William Dunlap, and it is fitting that the latter should have written our standard biography of the novelist. It is, to be sure, a very imperfect performance, but for this the author was not altogether to blame. Before the task was put into his hands, it had been undertaken by Paul Allen of Baltimore, who had gone so far as to print copious selections from Brown's rarer writings for inclusion in Volume I.[3] When the commission was given to Dunlap, it was agreed that these selections should stand. Much as he resented this encumbrance which occupied about seven-eighths of the volume, he was under the necessity of retaining it, and of inserting his material

[2] Wood, "Personal Recollections of the Stage," Philadelphia, 1855, p. 163; Francis, "Old New York," p. 205.
[3] "Arts of Design," Vol. I, p. 272.

wherever convenient openings could be found. Of the arrangement of the second volume he had complete control, and its construction is much superior to the first. Ninety continuous pages are given to biography and criticism; then follow about thirty pages of letters, and about three hundred and fifty pages of extracts and fragments. The work had been designed both as a memoir and as a repository for some of Brown's manuscripts and rare printed writings; hence a disproportion between selections and biography for which Dunlap was not responsible. But the modern reader is disposed to desire an exchange of most of the extracts for more letters and passages from the journal. The English edition of 1822 in some measure improved the work by reducing the whole to one volume of three hundred and thirty-seven pages with a continuous text, and an appendix containing the more important selections in the American edition.

The biographical portion, which is not over one hundred and thirty-five pages long, begins with an account, probably somewhat idealized, of Brown's precocious youth. His difficulty in choosing a profession, his attempts at law study, and his refusal to enter the practice are discussed. Then comes his New York residence, with its many friendships and literary activities. After his return to Philadelphia in 1801, the narrative proceeds rapidly to his death in 1810, and ends with a graceful eulogy. Brown's habits of mind and methods of literary work are discussed, and there is considerable judicious criticism of the novels. It is

Charles Brockden Brown

From a miniature by William Dunlap, about 1806

stated at the outset that the subject's chief claim to interest is as a pioneer, that planlessness and incompleteness mark his writings, and that his talent, though great, was undeveloped. No attempt is made to give undue credit, yet the treatment is kindly and admiring. For Brown's personality the author has hearty praise, but never extravagant adulation.

Like the "Memoirs of Cooke," the "Life of Brown" shows the influence of the newer biographical method. While the main stress is properly on the literary side, yet other interests and activities are not neglected. An effort is also made to judge the novelist's merits impartially, and to avoid indiscriminate laudation.

There is room for a new biography of Charles Brockden Brown, and it is to be hoped that some one may soon undertake it, so that we may have a completer record of his life, especially after 1800, than we at present possess. Meanwhile American literature is under obligation to Dunlap for nearly all that is known about our first professional man of letters.[4]

[4] When Herring and Longacre were projecting the "National Portrait Gallery," Dunlap was asked to furnish a biography of Brown. For this purpose he condensed his book to a very creditable sketch, and added a little new material of some importance. It was published in Volume III in 1836, accompanied by a portrait of the novelist, engraved from Dunlap's miniature painted in 1806.

II

THE spectacular drama of the rise and fall of Napoleon Bonaparte was approaching its *dénouement* in 1814. Dunlap, like most of his countrymen, rejoiced when the tide of victory turned against the dictator of Europe, and in two historical sketches he recounted the events which led to the Emperor's overthrow.

In 1812 Francis L. Clarke published at London a life of Wellington, who was then conducting the campaign in the Spanish Peninsula. Clarke's account extended to the siege of Burgos in the fall of 1812. The work was printed in New York in 1814 with a 54-page supplement by Dunlap, continuing the story of Wellington's triumphs from the siege of Burgos to the capitulation of Bordeaux in the spring of 1814. His statements were based mainly on the official despatches of Wellington and his generals, and of course showed the Duke in a favorable light, but without the flattery that Clarke lavished on him.

In the "Life of Wellington" Dunlap prophesied the early downfall of the French tyrant. In a second sketch he dealt with the fulfilment of this prophecy. His "Narrative of the Events which followed Bonaparte's Campaign in Russia to the Period of his Dethronement" was published at Hartford in 1814 both separately and as a supplement to an edition of Sir Robert Ker Porter's

"Narrative of the Campaign in Russia, During the Year 1812," first issued at London in 1813. Dunlap's account, seventy-five pages in length, begins after the flight from Russia, and embraces the battle of Leipzig, the capture of Paris, the banishment to Elba, and the establishment of the new French government. In discussing the reorganization of France, the historian showed himself a thorough American by deprecating the substitution of one unqualified monarchy for another when the time was ripe for a republic.

These two fragments are reasonably accurate, but their manner of procedure is open to criticism. Each is a solid mass of detailed military operations, related in a juiceless and pedestrian fashion, and almost unrelieved by considerations of larger significance than the number of attacks on a given position or the size of the armies involved.

Long years of participation in the dramatic affairs of the United States gave Dunlap a knowledge of their history which few of his contemporaries possessed, and it is especially fortunate that he had the inclination as well as the ability to chronicle the progress of those affairs.[5] In the preface to the "American Theatre" he said, quoting Colley Cibber, whose "Apology" served as a sort of model for him: "If I have any particular qualifica-

[5] Dunlap was not the first to make a phase of American culture the subject of a history. At least one work of this nature had already appeared, namely, Isaiah Thomas's "History of Printing in America," published in 1810.

tion for the task more than another, it is that I am perhaps the only person living (however unworthy) from whom the same materials can be collected."

For his facts he relied to some extent on the assistance of others: the investigations of his friends; the reminiscences of Lewis Hallam, who had come to this country as a boy in 1752, and of W. B. Wood of Philadelphia; and contributions by John Dunlap on Kotzebue and Schiller. But chiefly he relied on his own researches and on his journals and recollections covering a period of twenty or twenty-five years. The chronicle extends from the middle of the eighteenth century to the coming of Cooke in 1810. It is interspersed with sketches of the leading actors and playwrights, anecdotes of the stage, and opinions on various problems connected with the drama.

The book has many faults, not the least being occasional inaccuracy of statements. At the start the writer made the mistake of ascribing the origin of American histrionic art to the Hallam Company in 1752, whereas subsequent investigation has found that the profession was followed half a century before. Because his researches had not been carried back of this date, he was in error concerning the beginnings in nearly all the towns where the drama gained an early foothold. And in dealing with later events he sometimes stumbled over a date, or otherwise gave misinformation.

Another serious fault,—the book is not free from partiality. Certain actors and playwrights

are treated with more severity than they deserve, because of Dunlap's personal dislike. Moreover, the author was strongly prejudiced in favor of himself. He gave his plays and experiences much more prominence than their importance would warrant. Indeed, after the first seventy-five pages the work becomes more nearly an autobiography than a well-balanced history of the stage. While other theatres are from time to time considered, the overwhelming emphasis is on the New York theatre during the period of Dunlap's dramatic and managerial activity. We hear more about the "author of the Father of an only Child" than of all other playwrights combined, and we encounter two chapters of autobiography arbitrarily dragged in.

A third fault is the lack of a clear outline of the progress of our drama and the theatre. We are given many details in chronological order, but a bird's-eye view is hardly to be obtained.

If the "American Theatre" has numerous shortcomings, it has more excellences. In general, after the first dozen pages the information is reliable. Many of the facts recorded are to be met with nowhere else, because they came out of the writer's own experience, and are invaluable for the light they throw on our early stage conditions and personages.

Regarded as an autobiography, the work has distinct merit. Dunlap had the good sense to say the most about the things he knew best. Thus, we get interesting glimpses behind the scenes, ac-

counts of the quarrels, trials, and successes of actors and managers, pictures of the audiences, and descriptions of the players based on close acquaintance, all of which make it one of the most human books ever written on the theatre. In style it is more pleasing than any of the later treatises on the subject. Personalities, anecdotes, and digressions serve to enliven a theme which in the hands of Ireland and Seilhamer is often dreary reading.

Dunlap's opinions form no inconsiderable part of the volume. His ideals are frankly and forcibly stated. Realizing the influence of the theatre, he stood unhesitatingly for a moral stage, a stage on which virtue should be both practised and taught. He stood for a stage which should appeal only to the higher intelligence, with none of the cheap attraction of acrobatics, dances, and monsters which the audiences of his day demanded. He stood for a theatre that should not be the gathering place and parade-ground for the vicious and debased elements of the community. As the surest means to these ends he advocated—and in this he was ahead of his countrymen—a theatre owned and directed by the government, like those of France and Germany, a theatre in which money-making and reputation-making should be subordinated to the mental and moral improvement of the people. Having failed as a manager to bring his ideals to a realization because of his dependence on the public for his livelihood, Dunlap became convinced that only that theatre which was in a position to fashion popular taste, instead of following it,

could effect a permanent reform. Again and again he reiterated this idea. Almost the last words of the book are:

"One great theatre in each great city of the Union, supported and guided by the state, would remedy every evil attendant on our present playhouse system.

"We should have no managers seeking *only* to fill the treasury or pay hungry creditors—no stars rendering all attraction but that of novelty unprofitable—no benefit plays tempting actors to exceed their stated and certain income, and to descend to practices, for the purpose of gaining *patrons,* which tend to disgrace their profession, and sometimes end in destroying themselves—no display of impudent vice before the stage, or of immoral precept upon it. A theatre, so supported and conducted, must exhibit plays no less attractive for the purpose of mere amusement, and no less popular, but like the novels of Walter Scott, and James Fennimore Cooper, incomparably more fascinating as well as instructive, than much of the trash of the stage or the circulating library of former days."[6]

Subsequent writers on the American theatre have drawn copiously from Dunlap as the ultimate authority on many points, and all have treated him with respect except George O. Seilhamer. By Mr. Seilhamer he was arraigned for all the faults he possessed and many that he did not, and was found

[6] "American Theatre," pp. 404–5.

guilty of woeful incapacity for his task. Seilhamer was a Philadelphian, and one of his indictments against Dunlap was that he did not give sufficient attention to Philadelphia's laurels. Finding the New Yorker in error in some of his early statements, he eagerly seized the opportunity of condemning him *in toto*. "Dunlap was so uniformly inaccurate that it is impossible to accept anything he asserts as a fact." "Dunlap stands pre-eminent as a historical blunderer." "There probably never was a book written to throw light upon a subject that succeeded so completely [as the 'American Theatre'] in confusing it."[7] Such is the type of Seilhamer's criticism. After castigating Dunlap's inaccuracy in this sledge-hammer fashion, he frequently borrowed extensively from the "blunderer"—without giving credit; or, worse yet, fell into as serious error as he had accused his predecessor of. Seilhamer's "History of the American Theatre" is a monument of painstaking investigation, and its value is great, but the absurdly jealous and unscholarly treatment of Dunlap is an unmistakable blot.

Fortunately no one now attaches much weight to Seilhamer's abuse, which, by the way, was showered on all who had dared to write on his subject. It is generally recognized that Dunlap made mistakes, partly through oversight, partly through the inaccessibility of material that has since been obtainable. But present-day students of American drama honor him not only as a pioneer in the field

[7] Seilhamer, Vol. I, pp. 198, 286; Vol. II, p. 274.

of theatrical chronicling, but as the preserver of much information without which our knowledge of the subject would be distinctly impoverished.[8]

William Dunlap served the cause of American art more effectively with his pen than his brush; the "History of the Rise and Progress of the Arts of Design in the United States" is more valuable than all his canvases.

The plan of the work is biographical and strictly chronological; each artist is introduced at the point when his professional career began. At the proper place we come upon a sixty-nine-page sketch of William Dunlap, a garrulous but interesting account of his life, with special stress on his artistic activities. It was included as a warning against neglecting opportunities, and as evidence that he was incapable of attaining high rank as a painter. Interspersed through the biographies are brief disquisitions on the art academies of America, and on the origin and history of various branches of art, together with explanations of the mechanical processes they involve.

The term "art" is stretched to the breaking point; not only painters, sculptors, and architects, but even sign-painters, bank-note engravers, and die-sinkers are assembled within these hospitable pages. Or if a man, engaged in other pursuits,

[8] The "New York Mirror," Vol. X, p. 266, said that Dunlap had in preparation in 1833 a continuation of the stage history to the appearance of Edwin Forrest about 1826.

chanced to paint a little, he is to be found here with a word on his paintings and a careful discussion of his non-artistic labors. Thus Robert Fulton, who made a few poor portraits, is given eleven pages, devoted to his steamboat and other inventions. The boundaries of the United States are strained scarcely less. English and French artists, who may have visited this country, are treated as fully as the natives. For instance, Benjamin West's son, Raphael, who spent two years in America without doing any professional work, is given five pages.

In dealing with deceased artists, the author went to the most available sources for his facts, but in the case of a living man his *modus operandi* was to request a biographical account directly from him or from some close acquaintance. Frequently the letters, with appropriate comments, were published verbatim. In a manner, then, Dunlap's function was to act as editor for a large body of contributors, among whom were Irving and Cooper. This method resulted in a series of biographies and autobiographies, which have a first-hand veracity and a vitality that give them a peculiar worth.

In the present work Dunlap began at the beginning. Later investigation has unearthed no American artist, worthy of the name, prior to John Watson, with whose landing at Perth Amboy in 1715 the chronicle opens. And none of Watson's successors down to 1834 was overlooked. No practitioner of any of the arts of design was too

insignificant to be mentioned. If his merits did not warrant a place in the text, his name and dates were sure to appear in the appendix, reserved for the least important. The work thus has a unique value, since it preserves so complete a record of our early artists, whose very names in some instances would otherwise be forgotten.

The hero of the history is Benjamin West. His life, character, and work are admiringly, almost reverently, presented, yet with an accuracy which has made Dunlap's an authoritative account. Throughout the two volumes West's name constantly appears as the instructor and guide of the young artists from America, and as the chief honor and glory of contemporary art, both of America and England.

Stuart is handled with less veneration, and the weaknesses of his character are exposed; but his achievements are lauded without stint.[9] Allston, for his success in historical work, which Dunlap considered the highest form of painting, is ranked as second only to West, and in some ways even his superior. Sully, Jarvis, and Morse are cordially praised, and in general the author treats his fellow artists with kindly respect.

But when Dunlap wrote the "Arts of Design" he was an old and broken man, and he was not always free from petulance and irritability. This is well illustrated in the passage on Tisdale,

[9] For Volume I of the "National Portrait Gallery" Dunlap provided a biography of Stuart, reduced from the "Arts of Design."

whose refusal to give any information about himself provoked this retort: "If, therefore, I err, he must excuse me—the world will care nothing about it."[10] Dunlap's republicanism grew on him with the years, and in this book he took every occasion to deprecate patronage of art by the nobility, and to show his contempt for nobility in general. But this spirit of ill-will and vindictiveness was chiefly displayed toward John Trumbull. Dunlap hated Trumbull for a variety of reasons. That artist, because of a slight misunderstanding, had pettishly resigned his commission in the army during the Revolution, and withdrawn from the conflict. He had seen fit to malign West, whom he looked on as his enemy. As president of the American Academy he had treated younger artists with contempt, and had declared war against the National. He received $32,000 from the United States government for four poorly executed panels in the dome of the capitol. He was domineering, vain, mercenary, and pusillanimous—of this there is ample proof. For these causes, and perhaps others more personal, Dunlap developed a violent dislike for Trumbull, to which he did not fail to give rein in the "Arts of Design." For his best work he had nothing but praise, yet it was his poorer work and his faults of character and conduct that he chose to dwell on. He magnified trifles, misconstrued motives, and in general made Trumbull out a much worse person than he really was. If West may be called the hero of the history, surely Trumbull is the villain.

[10] Vol. II, p. 45.

Another shortcoming somewhat akin to this show of personal animosity, is the preponderance of mere gossip and scandal throughout. The biographical plan was adopted because it admitted of this sort of diversion, which it was thought would lend popular interest to the subject. Dunlap said: "I believe the public love anecdote and gossip—*that I do,* I am quite certain."[11] But anecdote and gossip proved so attractive to him that he forgot his duty as a historian. We look in vain for an estimate of an artist's place in the development of American art. We hear almost nothing of influences, and nothing at all of schools. The artists are not even catalogued according to branches. An engraver may be found sandwiched between a painter and an architect. The work sadly lacks organization, arrangement, and proportion, and consequently fails to give a perceptible outline of the "rise and progress of the arts of design in the United States." But, like the "American Theatre," it has, in spite of its faults, a place all its own as the repository of much that would otherwise be lost.

The style of this, Dunlap's most elaborate and pretentious product, is appropriately elaborate and pretentious. It was written in an era when American writers were still addicted to the heavy, pompous periods of the eighteenth century, and it partook of the mannerisms of its age. The stylistic qualities which distinguish all Dunlap's books are here intensified. In striving for pregnancy and weight he was sometimes reduced to making much

[11] "New York Mirror," Vol. XI, p. 248.

of little, with a resultant tone of insincerity and affectation. There is too much fondness for the first person singular, which at times is not to be distinguished from boasting; yet this, like his wordy discursiveness, is not unpardonable in a man of his years. On the other hand, Dunlap's style often possesses an expressiveness, a smoothness, and an animation which go far toward atoning for its imperfections.

Most of our author's books were greeted by the reviewers with amiable commonplaces, which I have not felt it worth while to quote. But the "Arts of Design" had a varied and interesting reception. The "Mirror," cordial as always, recommended the volumes to all, from the scholar to the conquest-sated belle, and predicted for it a sensation across the water.[12] The "American Quarterly Review" of Philadelphia complimented the writer's industry, but aptly suggested that the title be changed to "Anecdotes of Painters, Sculptors, Architects, and Engravers, and of any and every body who has had the remotest connection with the Arts of Design in the United States." It continued: "There is little of the dignity of history in its gossiping chapters, and much more information is communicated about the men than the artists. . . . The original critical portions are for the most part meagre and unsatisfactory."[13] The "North American Review" praised the minuteness of the research, the ease and clearness of the style, and

[12] Vol. XII, pp. 139, 199.
[13] Vol. XVII, pp. 143 ff.

the candor of the judgments, but found a lack of arrangement, selection, and compression in the material, and a partiality and animosity toward some artists. It considered the attacks on Trumbull unjust, and the temper displayed not becoming to a sensible man.[14]

The "American Monthly Magazine" stoutly championed Trumbull, and took the first opportunity to abuse Dunlap as an artist. When his painting, "Richard and Kenneth," appeared at the tenth exhibition of the National Academy, the magazine dipped its pen in vitriol, and incontinently damned this "daub equally void of drawing, taste or effect." Why did the Academy permit such an atrocity to blot its walls? It might have been done as well by a boy of fourteen! An artist who had so bitterly condemned his superiors, it was asserted, could not complain if he was subjected to a little impartial criticism.[15] But the most violent denunciation came from an anonymous writer, who, having contributed the sketch of John Vanderlyn to the "Arts of Design," felt himself and the painter so wronged by the changes that Dunlap made, that he published a pamphlet in defense of his friend and in condemnation of the unlucky historian. With such utterances as these did he vent his wrath:

"Indeed, sir, your two bulky tomes of a thousand pages, dignified by the pompous title of a

[14] Vol. XLI, pp. 146 ff.
[15] Vol. V, p. 316.

'History';—what are they but a miserable chronicle of mere gossip and scandal, about upon a par with our daily political press or police reports. . . . As an Artist, and certainly not of the first class, you assume a dictation over all of your profession. . . . The grave even, it seems, has proved no shelter to many of them, for you have dragged them, or their memoirs, before the public, but as I hope not before posterity—to degrade them of course, and at the same time, as certainly your common profession."[16]

As a final verdict on the whole matter I quote the opinion of a modern student of American art. Of Dunlap, Mr. Samuel Isham has said:

"He is our American Vasari. . . . He had a feeling for accuracy rare at the time. . . . He has been called 'the acrimonious Dunlap,' but the reader of to-day will not find the epithet justified. . . . It is only in his pages that we seem to touch the reality of West and Stuart and Trumbull and Allston and Sully. Men were as sensitive then as to-day, and the men of whom he wrote and their friends were displeased at his frankness; but viewed at the present distance of time, he seems rather kindly. He had his dislikes, but he was harder on no one than on himself."[17]

[16] "Review of the 'Biographical Sketch' of John Vanderlyn, published by William Dunlap, in his 'History of the Arts of Design,' with Some Additional Notices, respecting Mr. Vanderlyn, As an Artist." By a Friend of the Artist. New York, 1838, p. 62.

[17] "History of American Painting," pp. 72–3.

The closing period of Dunlap's life was occupied with research in the history of his State. This subject had of recent years received considerable attention, and a half-dozen histories of New York, written between 1814 and 1835, were in the field. For his authorities, Dunlap employed his precursors to some extent, but for the most part he went to the sources, and minutely examined newspapers, state and private documents, letters, journals, etc.

When the pinch of poverty became so sharp as to require immediate alleviation, he whipped into shape the material he already had, and in 1837 published his "History of New York, for Schools." His model was "Uncle Philip's Conversations with the Children about New York," written by F. L. Hawks and printed in 1835,—a book in which instruction is imparted by the question and answer method. Uncle Philip's chats ceased with the Declaration of Independence, and Dunlap continued the task. The interlocutors are supposed to be Uncle Betterworth, aged seventy-one, who is engaged in writing a history of the State, and bears a striking resemblance to William Dunlap; and four children between the ages of eight and fourteen. John, the oldest, shows a perfect genius for remembering dates and facts; William, aged twelve, speaks with the vocabulary of fifty; Philip's function is to shout "Hurrah!" in the heroic moments, and Mary is frankly bored when Indians are not the theme.

Before considering the war, Uncle Betterworth

questions the children on what they had learned from Uncle Philip, and thus the early history from Hudson's discovery is presented. After the first hundred pages the causes of the Revolution are taken up and discussed during the remainder of the volume. At this point the material becomes too complex and the style too weighty for juvenile minds. Volume II deals with the Revolution, and ends with the inauguration of Washington in 1789. Both parts, like Hawks's book, are well sprinkled with stories and moral disquisitions on the evils of drinking, smoking, idleness, etc.

An examination of this work in connection with the larger history, which followed it in two or three years, shows that in the main both came from the same manuscript. The text-book is independent through the first half of Volume I, but beginning with the causes of the Revolution, it contains almost nothing not found in the same words in the later and more amplified treatise. The situation is probably this: Up to 1837 Dunlap had carried on his research and written portions in the final form, with only the larger history in mind. Then being too impoverished to continue, he filled the gaps in his manuscript in a more juvenile style, and with slight revision sent it to press. Later investigation was given to the early periods and to certain phases of the Revolution, which had not as yet been thoroughly worked out, and the results were incorporated in the second publication.

The first part of the "History of the New Netherlands, Province of New York, and State of New

York, to the Adoption of the Federal Constitution," appeared in 1839. Beginning with the discovery of America, it proceeds with much detail through Hudson's exploration and the Dutch and English colonization. The last quarter of the volume deals with the causes of the war, and practically parallels the text-book. The second part was published posthumously in 1840, with a preface stating that while Volume I was in the press, the author had been stricken with a disease which ultimately proved fatal, and that the material of the present volume had been selected and arranged according to the design of the writer in so far as it had been expressed. I infer that John A. Dunlap was the editor from the facts that the copyright was secured by him, and that he assisted his father in other literary labors. The second volume details the events of the Revolution, with undue stress on the Arnold-André conspiracy, and concludes with the adoption of the Federal Constitution, an outline of which is given. An appendix of two hundred and forty-six pages follows, containing letters, documents, extracts from early records, and a large quantity of "Miscellaneous Matter" apparently drawn from the newspapers.

If Dunlap's work be compared with a good modern history of the State, it will be seen that very little escaped him and that his statements are generally accurate. As an investigator he possessed distinct ability; to his task he brought a perseverance and a minuteness of research not often to be found in an old and broken man. But perhaps this is the highest praise his last achieve-

ment can be given. As a treatise on New York history it leaves much to be desired. It is scarcely more than a series of details chronologically arranged, and presented in an impersonal and ineffective manner. There is no proper proportion or emphasis. There is no subordination of the unimportant, nor stressing of the significant; consequently the book gives no clear idea of the main current of events. Indian affairs, biography of both the small and the great, episodes involving oppression or the struggle against it, dramatic or picturesque occurrences,—these are disproportionately prominent because they were Dunlap's hobbies. A defect resulting from all this is that we gain no large view of the development of New York, no connected idea of her progress as a political unit, or of her contribution to the history of the nation. In other words, Dunlap was so absorbed in the contemplation of the trees that he failed to perceive the forest. Had he lived to complete the second volume, he might have remedied this fault to some extent, but probably not, for the fault seems to have been constitutional. In connection with his Napoleonic fragments, his chronicles of the theatre and art, and even his large paintings, we have noticed the same inability to convert a mass of details into a progressive unit.

The worth of the book as a historic document is not a little lessened by the decidedly partisan spirit displayed. As a Federalist Dunlap could not forget his antipathy to France, nor his conviction that unqualified suffrage was a very dangerous liberty.

As an American he could not forget his enmity for England, nor lose a chance to cast aspersions at her.

But defective though it is, the history deserves as much respect as any book of its time because of the overwhelming obstacles with which the author had to contend. Poverty, old age, and disease opposed him at every step, yet he did not give up the struggle until his hands and mind were powerless; and when the second volume appeared, a few months after his death, his triumph was complete. Perhaps it is as an example of dogged perseverance and unspectacular heroism that the "History of New York" has its greatest value.

III

It would have been strange if the energetic, versatile, and improvident Dunlap had not tried to establish a magazine, inasmuch as that occupation was then one of the popular modes of losing money. Since the founding of our first magazine at Philadelphia, in 1741, the country had seen multiplied dozens of the species rise, flourish for a day, and wither. The eighteenth century alone witnessed the outcropping of no less than fifty-seven of these journalistic mushrooms, most of which expired within a year, though two, the "New York Magazine; or, Literary Repository" and the "Massachusetts Magazine," achieved a veritable

Methuselah existence of eight years each.[18] The early years of the nineteenth century had their quota of these ill-fated enterprises. One, however, the "Port Folio," founded at Philadelphia in 1801 under the editorship of Joseph Dennie, attained the altogether unprecedented age of twenty-six years before it was laid in the ancestral tomb.

The modern monthly bears very little resemblance to its progenitors. These pioneers had almost no illustrations or advertisements. Their pages were filled with a variety of material calculated to hit divers tastes. A periodical of the better class, such as Charles Brockden Brown's "Monthly Magazine, and American Review," contained biographical sketches, travel papers, essays on superficial subjects, accounts of remarkable sights, events, etc., occasional tales, reviews of books and plays, household information, foreign and domestic occurrences, extracts from European periodicals, and a section devoted to poetry. The intellectual challenge was not great; the aim was to impart polite instruction and correct sentiments.

Dunlap established the "Monthly Recorder" in April, 1813. Just why he should have tried to replenish his depleted finances by entering the precarious field of journalism in the midst of the war, it would be difficult to explain, except that he had a gift for tumbling down financial stairways. Perhaps Dennie's comparative success inspired him; but if so, it was a will-o'-the-wisp inspiration, for

[18] P. L. Ford, "Check-list of Eighteenth Century Periodicals."

after five issues the "Monthly Recorder" fell into the bog of unpaid and insufficient subscriptions, which had swamped the goodly throng of its predecessors.

But the "Monthly Recorder," albeit its existence was of most uncomplimentary brevity, was as meritorious as the most of its kind. Its contents had as much dignity and solidity as any of its contemporaries. A synopsis of the April number will indicate the character of all. The issue opened with a biography of Dr. Edward Miller, whose portrait, engraved from a painting by Dunlap, served as frontispiece. There followed the first instalment of a letter-series, "The American in Europe"; an extract on eccentric character from Angeloni's letters; an essay contrasting superstition and religion; two letters on the theatre written in the Jonathan Oldstyle manner by "Timothy Teasdale"; a story of the Inquisition; an article on Leslie, the painter; a memorandum of the wars between the present United States and Canada, by S. L. Mitchill; a biographical notice of William Clifton; a fine arts section, containing an account of the American Academy, by the secretary; book reviews; notices of new publications; a dramatic review; a digest of public events; and a few scattered poems.

It was then the modest custom to publish magazine articles anonymously; hence it is impossible to say just how much of the contents of the five numbers came from Dunlap's pen, or who his contributors were. But it is easy to see the editor's

hand frequently, for instance in the biography of Miller, the Inquisition tale, and the article on Leslie in the April issue. As for the contributors, we know at least that Mitchill was one, and that John Dunlap assisted in the undertaking.[19]

Dunlap's journalistic activities were not confined to the editing of a short-lived magazine. He was also a prolific writer for the New York periodicals. The extent of his work in this direction cannot be ascertained because of the practice of anonymity already referred to. Yet some of his articles were signed, and to others he alluded in his Diary, so that I have been able to locate about nineteen contributions to magazines and newspapers. These represent various types of composition,—translation, philosophy, biography, criticism, and story; and some are of sufficient interest to be summarized here.

The earliest article which I have found dates from the period of Godwinian influence. It appeared in the "New York Magazine; or, Literary Repository" of October, 1797, under the heading "On Innocence and Generosity." It was written in answer to St. Pierre's "Vindication of Divine Providence," which had praised innocence as the most desirable of qualities. Dunlap declared a consciousness of virtue to be preferable to that of innocence, inasmuch as the former implies active ability for good, while the latter may imply only an absence of vice. "The most innocent of all ani-

[19] "Arts of Design," Vol. I, p. 272.

mals," said he, "is an oyster." St. Pierre had also expressed the sentimentalist's belief that generosity and feeling rather than reason should be the guide of life. In reply Dunlap said:

"These opinions are mischievous in the same degree that they are unphilosophic and unjust. Let man be just and he will never be generous; for the moment that, deaf to reason, and impelled by feeling, he oversteps the bounds of justice, he has done a wrong, he has committed injustice, he has injured a fellow-creature, and inflicted a wound on society."

In the next issue of the same periodical, Dunlap a second time attacked St. Pierre. The French writer had argued for an unreasoning love of country simply because it is one's own. The American contended that love of country should be based solely on the worth of the country; that blind patriotism is a frequent cause of stagnation, and a sure breeder of injustice. Obviously Dunlap had drunk deep at the Godwinian well.

The "Mirror" of September 14, 1833, contained a review of Croker's edition of Boswell's "Life of Johnson." In the manner of the contemporary English reviews, the writer expressed his opinions on the subject of the book rather than on the book itself. Dunlap was no admirer of Johnson, the philosopher. He considered his teaching dangerously immoral and a deliberate perversion of the truth. Johnson's declaration, "It is better that some be unhappy than that none should be happy;

which would be the case in a general state of equality," roused the republican's ire. In other words, said Dunlap, "it is better that the mass of mankind should be poor and oppressed, vicious and unhappy . . . because, *otherwise,* the great could not revel in that superfluity which constitutes happiness." Equality, he maintained, far from destroying happiness, would increase it by doing away with ignorance and vice. "How is it," said Johnson, "that we hear the loudest yelps for liberty among the drivers of negroes?" Dunlap answered that the loud yelps came from those upon whom England had forced negro slavery, and that the yelpers were those who were striving to abolish the evil after having shaken off the chains of foreign dominance, which Johnson would have riveted on them. While admiring the lexicographer's powers of mind, the writer considered his political and moral doctrines perniciously false.

An essay on art, which Dunlap had read before the New York Lyceum, was published in the "American Monthly Magazine" of February, 1836. He stated the principle that art is a product of national and individual independence, and that artists must be left free to direct their own institutions if they are to succeed. (The old quarrel between the two academies had not been forgotten.) To those men of wealth who tried to run the academies, he recommended that they could better serve the cause by purchasing foreign masterpieces and establishing museums.

Nothing that Dunlap ever wrote is more read-

able than two picaresque tales, published in the "Mirror" of November 12, 1836, and January 7, 1837. They deal with a pre-Revolutionary rogue, *Tom Bell,* who was extraordinarily ingenious at parting the fool and his money. He also had the faculty of escaping with the ill-gotten gains, leaving his accomplices to pay the penalty. Both tales are told with sprightliness and animation, and one could desire further exploits of the entertainingly iniquitous *Tom Bell.*

IV

DUNLAP lived in an age when drinking was almost a universal practice, and when drunkenness was much more common among people of respectability than it is to-day. He himself, while not all his life a total abstainer, was always very moderate in his potations, unless it might have been during his residence in England. The extent of his temperance is well illustrated by an incident which occurred at a banquet given in honor of Cooke. A decanter was upset on the table, and the wine running from Cooke toward Dunlap, the actor exclaimed, "See! is it not very strange? The wine runs from *me!* and toward *that* man, too, of all others."

Dunlap replied, "Do you not know the reason?"

"No—what is it?"

"I never abuse it."[20]

[20] "Memoirs of Cooke," Vol. II, p. 318.

By personal experience Dunlap found that alcohol was not essential, by observation he became convinced that it was dangerous, and eventually he developed into a temperance advocate. To propagate his views, at the age of seventy he published a novel called "Thirty Years Ago; or, The Memoirs of a Water Drinker."

The incidents center about the Park Theatre of New York, a rather unexpected haunt for a teetotaler. The abstemious hero is a comedian, blest with the name of *Zebediah Spiffard,* whose diminutive body is topped off with a face of exceeding homeliness and a shock of orange-red hair, —truly a novel hero for a novel. *Zebediah* as a boy became a confirmed and unshakable water-drinker because of the fatal inebriety of his mother. At the opening of the story the comedian has just married, on brief acquaintance and for reasons not specified, a tall and stately tragedienne, both larger and older than himself, and of none too savory a reputation. Poor *Spiffard* soon learns to his unutterable woe that his wife and mother-in-law are also slaves of the bottle. (Dunlap apparently believed in woman's rights.)

The heroine, *Emma Portland,* a cousin of *Mrs. Spiffard's,* is one of those transcendingly beautiful maidens whom novelists have ever loved to create. Her angelic face is crowned by a profusion of flowing tresses that are forever escaping from confinement and falling in cascades about her lovely form. Her mind is pure and unsullied as a lily, and her days are spent in charitable deeds.

Her fiancé (for in this curious book the hero and heroine have no designs on each other) is *Henry Johnson,* a poor but sterling youth with a sick mother to care for.

The lesson of temperance is powerfully enforced by the drunken exploits of *Cooke,* who is one of the leading characters of the tale. One night the actor is found dead drunk in the snow, and being carried to *Henry's* home, is recognized by *Mrs. Johnson* as her one-time husband and the father of her son.[21]

In the closing chapters *Mrs. Spiffard,* who has gone from bad to worse, commits suicide, a debauched aunt of *Zebediah's* dies of alcoholism, and *Cooke* is borne to a drunkard's grave. The comedian now turns preacher and devotes himself to organizing temperance societies; while *Henry* and *Emma* receive the reward of virtue, and are happily married.

The novel is Dunlap's least praiseworthy book. It is without plot or definite structure, and the content is often ludicrous. The strained and exaggerated language, the featuring of trifling episodes, the over-wrought sentimentality, the unnaturalness of the characters, the shallow and crudely enforced moralizing, and the multiplied horrors of strong drink cause the "Water Drinker" to rank as an inferior specimen of Sunday-school fiction.

[21] Dunlap admitted that there was no basis in reality for assuming this marriage, but it was in keeping with Cooke's marital record.

But a certain amount of interest must be conceded it. There are hints of the appearance and customs of old New York, glimpses behind the scenes at the Park Theatre, and side-lights on Cooke, all of which are worth reading, though not of especial value. The book is chiefly interesting for the way in which the author has utilized his acquaintanceship and his experiences for the making of a story. Besides Cooke, a half-dozen other real people, including T. A. Cooper, Drs. Francis and McLean, and Governor Tompkins, are introduced by name; and two or three more are presented under a disguise. The portrait of the redoubtable *Zebediah* himself was unquestionably drawn from William Twaits, the comedian; and *Treadwell,* in whose law office *Spiffard* at one time studied, bears a striking resemblance to Robert Treat Paine, Jr.

As for the incidents, at least half of them are to be found in essence in the "Memoirs of Cooke," the "American Theatre," and the Diary. Several elements in *Zebediah's* youth are autobiographical, for instance the favorite books, the trip to Oxford and Stamford, and the visit to the battle-field of Quebec, where an ancestor had bled. There is an elaborate hoax played on the comedian by his professional friends, which is recorded in the "American Theatre," with Twaits as the victim. There is a fake duel between Cooper and Cooke, elaborated from the "Memoirs." There is an excursion to a mad-house, extracted almost bodily from Volume XXX of the Diary. Were it worth

while, numerous other instances of the same thing might be cited.

In some sense the book is an epitome of Dunlap's mind. None of his favorite interests or opinions is omitted. The theatre and its need of reform and government control, art, George Washington, Yankee and Irish servants, sentimentalism, moralizing, hatred of slavery and belief in colonization, contempt for English snobbery, suspicion of France,—such are the warp and woof of the novel as they were of its author's mental fabric. Even the geography of the book is typical, embracing as it does Stamford and Virginia, the extremes of Dunlap's peregrinations.

With all its imperfections, the "Water Drinker" was well received and warmly reviewed. To a modern reader it is merely a curiosity, deserving of respect as a serious effort to promote temperance when temperance was unpopular, but devoid of merit as a piece of literature.

There were few kinds of writing that Dunlap did not attempt. His non-dramatic works testify to an unflagging energy and a variety of interests that would be creditable to any one, and especially so to a man who had gained prominence in other lines of endeavor as well. These works have striking defects and some are almost worthless, yet a few are of such importance as to hold a unique position in their respective fields.

CHAPTER VI

Conclusion

WILLIAM DUNLAP has never ranked among our distinguished men of letters, and he will never do so. He labored as zealously as any, but no amount of application could make up for the gift that he lacked. He challenges our interest almost wholly as a pioneer. He took up his pen when the literature of the United States was still feeble and ill-supported. He threw himself especially into the neglected and unremunerative field of American drama, and though he produced nothing of lasting merit, he surpassed the work of his forerunners, he established play-writing as a respectable profession, he stimulated others to follow his example, and he exerted a distinct influence in determining the course of our drama during the last years of the eighteenth century,—not by his original conceptions, to be sure, but by imitating English types.

As manager of the New York theatre, he was able to bring his innovations before the public, and to hasten their adoption by his contemporaries. This position also enabled him to gain a hearing for other native dramatists, and thus to encourage further activity in the same direction. He performed an additional service of real importance by translating and staging a large number of

French and German plays. Hitherto American theatre-goers had been almost totally ignorant of foreign drama except that of England, but Dunlap gave prominence to other countries as well, and so helped broaden the outlook of our citizens on the literature of the world.

Upon the theatre as an institution his effect was less marked. Yet he emphasized scenery more than had been done before, and he made the playhouse as moral and intellectual as his patrons would permit.

But Dunlap's achievements were by no means confined to the theatre. His non-dramatic writings were numerous; and indeed his present-day value rests on some of these, rather than on his plays. As the biographer of George Frederick Cooke and Charles Brockden Brown, and as the historian of the American stage and American art, though sometimes prone to error, he recorded a large quantity of information that could have come from no one else, and that greatly enriches our knowledge of those subjects to-day.

Still another prominent line of Dunlap's endeavor was painting. The making of miniatures, oil portraits, and exhibition pictures occupied a considerable portion of his life. His exhibition pictures seem to have perished, with no attendant loss to art, but the miniatures and portraits which remain indicate that at his best he was a thoroughly capable painter. But in this field again Dunlap's place is primarily that of a pioneer. He was one of the early New Yorkers to take up

painting as a profession, he was a founder of the first art academy in New York worthy of the name, and he was in some sense a missionary of art to the more remote communities by virtue both of his itinerant occupation and of his traveling show pictures.

As a workman, Dunlap belongs to what Charles Lamb has called the great race—the borrowers. Having a good deal of constructive skill but no imagination, he drew his material from the most available sources. In his painting he borrowed wholesale from Benjamin West. In his plays he borrowed from Shakespeare, Dekker, and the English writers of his own day, from novels, newspapers, and history. In his translations, themselves a species of borrowing, he borrowed from anybody who had already adapted the same pieces.

But by means of his borrowing Dunlap aided the progress of American culture. Before the new and uncertain nation could develop any sort of culture of its own, it must first acquire a sense of culture and a desire for it, and this could most readily be brought about through a familiarity with the culture of the Old World. By helping, through his imitations and borrowings, to gain currency in the United States for the art and literature of Europe, he made a small but definite contribution to the intellectual growth of the young nation.

In a survey of Dunlap's work, two facts stand out most clearly. In the first place, he was unusually prolific and surprisingly versatile. And

in each department of his activity, while producing much that was decidedly bad, he also produced some results that were more than ordinarily good, considering his period. Second, whether his output was good or bad, his labor was prompted by motives which deserve complete respect. He lived at a time when American art and literature were compelled to struggle for existence, with no popular encouragement and support. Yet he was convinced that art and literature were of more value than dollars and cents. He allied himself with the exponents of these pursuits; and throughout a long life, marked often by severe poverty and distress, he remained faithful to the cause which he had espoused.

List of William Dunlap's Writings

Original Dramatic Works

1 "The Modest Soldier; or, Love in New York." Written 1787.

2 "The Father; or, American Shandyism."

Played at the John Street Theatre, New York, September 7, 1789.

Printed at New York, September 14, 1789. Reprinted at Halifax immediately. Also in the "Massachusetts Magazine; or, Monthly Museum," October and November, 1789, Vol. I, pp. 620–29, 649–55. Revised as

"The Father of an Only Child."

Printed in the "Dramatic Works of William Dunlap," Vol. I, Philadelphia, 1806.

Copies of this volume were broken up by David Longworth, and each play was issued separately with an additional title-page, New York, 1807. This volume was reissued as Vol. XXII of Longworth's "English and American Stage," New York, 1808.

The edition of 1789 was reprinted as No. 2 of the Publications of the Dunlap Society, New York, 1887.

[1] For a complete title-page bibliography of Dunlap, see Oscar Wegelin, "A Bibliographical Checklist of the Plays and Miscellaneous Writings of William Dunlap." In "Bibliographica Americana," edited by Charles F. Heartman. Vol. I, New York, 1916.

3 "Darby's Return."

Played at the John Street Theatre, New York, November 24, 1789.

Printed at New York, December, 1789. Reprinted in the "New York Magazine; or, Literary Repository," January, 1790, Vol. I, pp. 47–51. Also at Philadelphia, 1791. In the "Dramatic Works of William Dunlap," Vol. I, Philadelphia, 1806. Reissued by Longworth in 1807 and 1808 as was "The Father." In second series No. 8 of the Publications of the Dunlap Society, New York, 1899, Appendix.

4 "The Miser's Wedding." Sometimes called "The Wedding."

Played at the John Street Theatre, New York, June, 1793.

5 "The Fatal Deception; or, The Progress of Guilt."

Played at the John Street Theatre, New York, April 24, 1794.

Printed as

"Leicester."

In the "Dramatic Works of William Dunlap," Vol. I, Philadelphia, 1806. Reissued by Longworth in 1807 and 1808 as was "The Father."

6 "Shelty's Travels."

Played at the John Street Theatre, New York, April 24, 1794.

7 "Fontainville Abbey."

Played at the John Street Theatre, New York, February 17, 1795.

Epilogue printed in the "New York Magazine; or, Literary Repository," May, 1795, Vol. VI,

p. 183. The play printed in the "Dramatic Works of William Dunlap," Vol. I, Philadelphia, 1806. Reissued by Longworth in 1807 and 1808 as was "The Father."

8 "The Archers; or, Mountaineers of Switzerland." Sometimes called "William Tell; or, The Archers."

Played at the John Street Theatre, New York, April 18, 1796.

Printed at New York, 1796.

9 "The Mysterious Monk."

Played at the John Street Theatre, New York, October 31, 1796.

Printed as

"Ribbemont; or, The Feudal Baron."

New York, 1803. In Longworth's "English and American Stage," Vol. I, New York, 1803 (?).

10 "The Knight's Adventure."

Revised by John Hodgkinson as

"The Man of Fortitude; or, The Knight's Adventure."

Played at the John Street Theatre, New York, June 7, 1797.

Printed at New York, 1807. The title-page bears only Hodgkinson's name.

11 "André."

Played at the Park Theatre, New York, March 30, 1798.

Printed at New York, 1798. London, 1799. The edition of 1798 was reprinted as No. 4 of the Publications of the Dunlap Society, New

York, 1887. Also in "Representative American Plays," edited by Arthur Hobson Quinn, New York, 1917.

12 "Sterne's Maria; or, The Vintage."

Played at the Park Theatre, New York, January 14, 1799.

13 "The Natural Daughter."

Played at the Park Theatre, New York, February 8, 1799.

14 "The Temple of Independence."

Played at the Park Theatre, New York, February 22, 1799.

15 "The Italian Father."

Played at the Park Theatre, New York, April 15, 1799.

Printed at New York, 1810. In "Dramatic Works of William Dunlap," Vol. II, New York, 1816.

16 "The Knight of Guadalquiver."

Played at the Park Theatre, New York, December 5, 1800.

17 "The Soldier of '76."

Played at the Park Theatre, New York, February 23, 1801.

18 "The Retrospect; or, The American Revolution."

Played at the Park Theatre, New York, July 5, 1802.

19 "Liberal Opinions."

Played at the Park Theatre, New York, January, 1803.

20 "The Glory of Columbia—Her Yeomanry!"

Played at the Park Theatre, New York, July 4, 1803.

"The Songs, Duets, and Chorusses," printed at New York, 1803. Also in Longworth's "English and American Stage," Vol. XV, New York, *c.* 1806.

The play printed at New York, 1817.

21 "Bonaparte in England."

Played at the Park Theatre, New York, December 19, 1803.

22 "The Proverb; or, Conceit Can Cure; Conceit Can Kill."

Played at the Park Theatre, New York, February 20, 1804.

23 "Lewis of Monte Blanco; or, The Transplanted Irishman."

Played at the Park Theatre, New York, March 12, 1804.

24 "The Freedom of the Seas." A song.

Sung at the Park Theatre, New York, July 4, 1810.

Printed in the "New York Evening Post," July 3 and 5, 1810. Also with "Yankee Chronology; or, Huzza for the Constitution!" New York, 1812.

25 "Yankee Chronology." A song.

Sung at the Park Theatre, New York, July 4, 1812.

Augmented into an interlude,

"Yankee Chronology; or, Huzza for the Constitution!"

Played at the Park Theatre, New York, September 7, 1812.

Printed at New York, 1812.

26 "Yankee Tars." A song.

Sung at the Park Theatre, New York, December 10, 1812.

Printed with "Yankee Chronology; or, Huzza for the Constitution!" New York, 1812.

27 "The Battle of New Orleans."

Played at the Park Theatre, New York, July 4, 1816 (?).

28 "The Flying Dutchman."

Played at the Bowery Theatre, New York, May 25, 1827.

29 "A Trip to Niagara; or, Travellers in America."

Played at the Bowery Theatre, New York, November 28, 1828.

Printed at New York, 1830.

30 "Forty and Twenty." Original or translated?

Unacted.

31 "Robespierre." Original or translated?

Unacted.

Dramatic Translations

a. *From the French*

1 "Tell Truth and Shame the Devil." (Robineau.)

Played at the John Street Theatre, New York, January 9, 1797.

Printed at New York, 1797.

2 "The School for Soldiers." (Mercier.)

Played at the Park Theatre, New York, July 4, 1799.

3 "The Robbery." (Monvel.)

Played at the Park Theatre, New York, December 30, 1799.

4 "Abbé de l'Épée." (Bouilly.)

Played at the Park Theatre, New York, March 8, 1801.

5 "The Merry Gardener." (Author unknown.)

Played at the Park Theatre, New York, February 3, 1802.

6 "The Voice of Nature." (Caigniez.)

Played at the Park Theatre, New York, February 4, 1803.

Printed at New York, 1803. Second edition, 1807. In Longworth's "English and American Stage," Vol. XXI, New York, *c.* 1808. In the "Dramatic Works of William Dunlap," Vol. II, New York, 1816.

7 "The Wife of Two Husbands." (Pixerécourt.)

Played at the Park Theatre, New York, April 4, 1804.

Printed at New York, 1804. Second edition, 1811. In Longworth's "English and American Stage," Vol. III, New York, *c.* 1804. In the "Dramatic Works of William Dunlap," Vol. III, New York, 1816.

8 "Nina." (Marsollier.)

Played at the Park Theatre, New York, December 28, 1804.

9 "Thirty Years; or, The Life of a Gamester." (Goubaux and Ducange.)

Played at the Bowery Theatre, New York, February 22, 1828.

b. *From the German*

1 "The Stranger." (Kotzebue.)

Played at the Park Theatre, New York, December 10, 1798.

2 "Lovers' Vows." (Kotzebue.)

Played at the Park Theatre, New York, March 11, 1799.

Printed at New York, 1814. In the "Dramatic Works of William Dunlap," Vol. III, New York, 1816.

3 "Count Benyowski." (Kotzebue.)

Played at the Park Theatre, New York, April 1, 1799.

4 "Don Carlos." (Schiller.)

Played at the Park Theatre, New York, May 6, 1799.

5 "Indians in England." (Kotzebue.)

Played at the Park Theatre, New York, June 14, 1799.

6 "False Shame." (Kotzebue.)

Played at the Park Theatre, New York, December 11, 1799.

7 "The Wild Goose Chace." (Kotzebue.)

Played at the Park Theatre, New York, January 24, 1800.

Printed as No. 1 of "The German Theatre" (Dunlap), New York, March, 1800.

8 "The Force of Calumny." (Kotzebue.)

Played at the Park Theatre, New York, February 5, 1800.

9 "The Virgin of the Sun." (Kotzebue.)

Played at the Park Theatre, New York, March 12, 1800.

Printed as No. II of "The German Theatre" (Dunlap), New York, March, 1800.

10 "Pizarro in Peru; or, The Death of Rolla." (Kotzebue.)

Played at the Park Theatre, New York, March 26, 1800.

Printed as No. III of "The German Theatre" (Dunlap), New York, May, 1800.

11 "The Stranger's Birthday." (Kotzebue.)

Played at the Park Theatre, New York, April 23, 1800.

12 "Fraternal Discord." (Kotzebue.)

Played at the Park Theatre, New York, October 24, 1800.

Printed at New York, 1809. In "Dramatic Works of William Dunlap," Vol. II, New York, 1816.

13 "Abaellino, the Great Bandit." (Zschokke.)

Played at the Park Theatre, New York, February 11, 1801.

Printed at New York, 1802. Another edition, 1803. So-called second edition, 1807. Third edition, 1814. Fourth edition, 1820. In Longworth's "English and American Stage," Vol. I, New York, 1803 (?). In the "Dramatic Works of William Dunlap," Vol. III, New York, 1816.

14 "Where Is He?" (Author unknown.)

Played at the Park Theatre, New York, December 2, 1801.

15 "Peter the Great; or, The Russian Mother." (Babo.)

Played at the Park Theatre, New York, November 15, 1802.

Printed at New York, 1814. In the "Dramatic Works of William Dunlap," Vol. III, New York, 1816.

16 "The Good Neighbor." (Iffland.)

Played at the Park Theatre, New York, February 28, 1803.

Printed at New York, 1814. In the "Dramatic Works of William Dunlap," Vol. II, New York, 1816.

17 "The Blind Boy." (Kotzebue.)

Played at the Park Theatre, New York, March 30, 1803.

18 "La Perouse." (Kotzebue.)

Unacted.

Doubtful Attributions

1 "Self-Immolation; or, Family Distress." (Kotzebue.)

2 "The Count of Burgundy." (Kotzebue.)

3 "The Corsicans; or, The Dawnings of Love." (Kotzebue.)

4 "Fiesco." (Schiller.)

5 "Blue Beard; or, Female Curiosity."

6 "The Africans."

7 "Rinaldo Rinaldini."

NON-DRAMATIC WORKS

1 "Ella—A Norwegian Tale."

and

"Cololoo—An Indian Tale."

In "American Poems, Selected and Original," Vol. I, Litchfield (Connecticut, 1793). Also in "The Columbian Muse, A Selection of American Poetry from Various Authors of Established Reputation," New York, 1794.

2 "Memoirs of the Life of George Frederick Cooke." Two volumes.

New York, 1813. London, 1813. London, second edition, 1815.

3 "The Monthly Recorder."

New York, April to August, 1813. Collected as "A Record, Literary and Political, of Five Months in the Year 1813. By William Dunlap and Others."

4 A Supplement of 54 pages to Francis L. Clarke's "Life of Wellington."

New York, 1814.

5 "A Narrative of the Events which followed Bonaparte's Campaign in Russia to the Period of his Dethronement."

Hartford, 1814. Also printed as

A Supplement of 75 pages to Sir Robert Ker Porter's "Narrative of the Campaign in Russia, During the Year 1812."

Hartford, 1814. Second edition, 1815.

6 "The Life of Charles Brockden Brown." Two volumes.

Philadelphia, 1815. London, 1822,—one volume.

7 "Description of Dunlap's Painting of Christ Rejected By the High Priests, Elders and People, When brought by Pilate from the Judgment Hall to the Pavement."

Norfolk (1822).

8 "Address to the Students of the National Academy of Design, at the Delivery of the Premiums, Monday, the 18th of April, 1831."

New York, 1831. London, "Library of the Fine Arts," 1832, Vol. IV, pp. 143–51.

9 "A History of the American Theatre."

New York, 1832. London, 1833,—two volumes.

10 "History of the Rise and Progress of the Arts of Design in the United States." Two volumes.

New York, 1834.

11 "Gilbert Charles Stuart." A biographical sketch in the "National Portrait Gallery of Distinguished Americans," Vol. I.

New York, 1834. Philadelphia, 1852.

12 "Charles Brockden Brown." A biographical sketch in the "National Portrait Gallery of Distinguished Americans," Vol. III.

New York, 1836. Philadelphia, 1852.

13 "Thirty Years Ago; or, The Memoirs of a Water Drinker." Two volumes.

New York, 1836. Reprinted as

"Memoirs of a Water Drinker." Two volumes in one.

New York, 1837.

14 "A History of New York, for Schools." Two volumes.

New York, 1837. Second edition, 1855.

15 "History of the New Netherlands, Province of New York, and State of New York, to the Adoption of the Federal Constitution." Two volumes.

New York, Vol. I, 1839; Vol. II, 1840.

Contributions to Periodicals

This list does not pretend to include all of Dunlap's magazine and newspaper contributions. A complete bibliography is impossible because much of his work of this nature was, no doubt, published anonymously. Only signed articles or those to which he alluded in his Diary are included here.

1 "The Zephyrs, An Idyl. (Translated from the German of Gesner, by W. Dunlap.)"

"New York Magazine; or, Literary Repository," December, 1795, Vol. VI, p. 760.

2 "First Idyl of Gesner. (Translated from the German by Wm. Dunlap.) Daphne—Chloe."

"New York Magazine; or, Literary Repository," January, 1796, new series, Vol. I, p. 49.

3 "On Innocence and Generosity."

"New York Magazine; or, Literary Repository," October, 1797, new series, Vol. II, p. 518.

4 "Remarks on the Love of Country."

"New York Magazine; or, Literary Repository," November, 1797, new series, Vol. II, p. 582.

5 "Biographical Sketch of the Late Gilbert Stuart. [By William Dunlap, Esq.]"

"Knickerbocker," April, 1833, Vol. I, p. 195.

6 "Scraps and Miscellanies. By William Dunlap, Esq." (*a*) "Thomas Dowse." (*b*) "Specimen of Indian Eloquence."

"Knickerbocker," May, 1833, Vol. I, pp. 281–4.

7 "Boswell's Life of Johnson."

"New York Mirror," September 14, 1833, Vol. XI, p. 82.

8 "English Travellers."

"New York Mirror," October 5, 1833, Vol. XI, p. 111.

9 Review of a medical book by Dr. William Beaumont.

"Evening Star," October 10, 1833.

10 "Memoir of Thomas Abthorpe Cooper."

"New York Mirror," November 2, 1833, Vol. XI, p. 142.

11 "The Ghost Murderer. By William Dunlap."

"New York Mirror," January 17, 1835, Vol. XII, p. 225.

12 "Proceedings of the American Lyceum. Essay on the Influence of the Arts of Design; and the True Modes of Encouraging and Perfecting Them. By William Dunlap."

"American Monthly Magazine," February, 1836, Vol. VII, p. 113.

13 "Critical Hints." Signed "W. D."

"American Monthly Magazine," May, 1836, Vol. VII, p. 502.

14 "Tom Bell. A Tale of the Good Old Time. By William Dunlap."

"New York Mirror," November 12, 1836, Vol. XIV, p. 157.

15 "Tom Bell and the Princess Susannah Carolina Matilda. By William Dunlap."

"New York Mirror," January 7, 1837, Vol. XIV, p. 217.

16 "The Night Jumpers; or, The Yankee Tom and Jerry. By William Dunlap."

"New York Mirror," July 1, 1837, Vol. XV, p. 2.

17 "The Dancing Bear. Imitated from the German of Gellert, by William Dunlap, August, 1799."

"New York Mirror," July 8, 1837, Vol. XV, p. 10.

18 "Mr. Catlin's Lectures. By William Dunlap."

"New York Mirror," October 14, 1837, Vol. XV, p. 126.

19 "The Vanity of Human Wishes. By William Dunlap."

"New York Mirror," December 30, 1837, Vol. XV, p. 211.

Partial List of Dunlap's Extant Paintings

THE following catalogue is far from complete. Two facts have tended to scatter Dunlap's pictures widely, and to render them inaccessible: First, he practised his vocation all the way from Norfolk to Montreal. Second, the contents of his studio were sold at auction shortly after his death. Though the majority of his paintings are probably still in existence, it is now impossible to locate many of them.

a. *Miniatures*

1 Armitt Brown.
Owned by Mrs. Fred Brown, Philadelphia.

2 Charles Brockden Brown.
Owned by the Brown family, Philadelphia.

3 Charles Brockden Brown.
Owned by Mr. Herbert Lee Pratt, New York City.

4 Charles Brockden Brown.
In the Lucy Wharton Drexel Collection, Penrynn, Penn.

5 Mrs. Charles Brockden Brown.
In the Lucy Wharton Drexel Collection, Penrynn, Penn.

6–7 Two miniatures of George Frederick Cooke.
Owned by The Players, New York City.

8 Thomas Abthorpe Cooper. (Copied from Jarvis's oil portrait.)
Owned by The Players, New York City.

9 Margaret Dunlap.
Owned by the Johnson family, Staten Island.

10–11 Two miniatures of William Dunlap.
Owned by Mrs. W. H. Carmalt, New Haven, Conn.

12 Mrs. William Dunlap.
Owned by Mrs. W. H. Carmalt, New Haven, Conn.

13 Timothy Dwight. (By Dunlap?)
Owned by Mrs. W. H. Carmalt, New Haven, Conn.

14 President Tyler.
Owned by Mr. Albert Rosenthal, Philadelphia.

15 Mrs. Wignell.
Owned by Prof. Theodore S. Woolsey, New Haven, Conn.

16 Col. Hugh Williamson.
Present location unknown.

17 Francis Bayard Winthrop.
Owned by the Johnson family, Staten Island.

18 Mrs. Benjamin Woolsey, 1st. (Copied from an oil portrait by an unknown artist.)
Owned by Mrs. W. H. Carmalt, New Haven, Conn. (?)

19 Mrs. Benjamin Woolsey, 2nd.
Owned by Mr. William S. Johnson, Mamaroneck, New York.

20 Capt. John Taylor Woolsey. (By Dunlap?)
Owned by Mrs. W. H. Carmalt, New Haven, Conn.

21 William Walton Woolsey.
Owned by Mr. William S. Johnson, Mamaroneck, New York.

22–25 Four miniatures of unknown persons.
Owned by Mr. Albert Rosenthal, Philadelphia.

b. *Oil Portraits*

1 Anthony Bleecker.
Owned by the Society Library, New York City.

2 Anthony Bleecker.
Owned by Mrs. Fannie W. Neilson, Newburgh, New York.

3 De Witt Clinton.
Owned by the Brook Club, New York City.

4 John Adams Conant.
Owned by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City.

5 Mrs. John Adams Conant.
Owned by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City.

6 Mrs. Thomas A. Cooper.
Owned by the Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, Ohio.

7 Margaret Dunlap.
Owned by Mrs. W. H. Carmalt, New Haven, Conn.

8 The Artist showing a picture from "Hamlet" to his parents.
Owned by the New York Historical Society, New York City.

9–10 Two small portraits of Mrs. William Dunlap.
Owned by relatives of the family.

11 Portrait of a Lady.
Owned by the Worcester Art Museum, Worcester, Mass.

12 Rev. Enoch M. Low.
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